[ARCHERS]

[p.184-c] P
society is to take place, any raiding of the 575
plantations of village women that is proposed is
made known to the villagers in advance, and
meat is offered in exchange.

Schebesta (1948, 501 ff.) gives a detailed 3
description of a joint village-Mbuti *toré* cere- 575
mony. At about 10 o'clock at night, announced 796
by blasts on the trumpet, a procession of some 534
20 men, villagers, and Mbuti, entered the vil- [535]
lage, dancing wildly. The Pygmies (as always)
were the musicians and blew into three sonor-
ous clay pots of different sizes, the largest being
called "mother" and the others "children." The
largest pot contained just enough water to P
cover the bottom, into which a pipe was 3
thrust. Some sang; others made weird noises by [533] ●
holding their noses.[1] In the morning the proces-
sion left for the Pygmy camp, two hours away. P
Before they passed through small village ham- 2
lets, someone was sent ahead to warn the in- [562]
habitants who had not heard the approaching [858]
blasts of the long wooden horn; women and
children fled to the shelter of their huts as the
procession went by. In one village a woman who
remained in sight was threatened and made to
give a chicken in payment for her release. On
nearing the Pygmy camp, the trumpet was
hidden in the brush, and the musicians took
another path. The main procession entered the
camp, where there were only a few old men and
their wives.

[NET HUNTERS]

[P 210-A]

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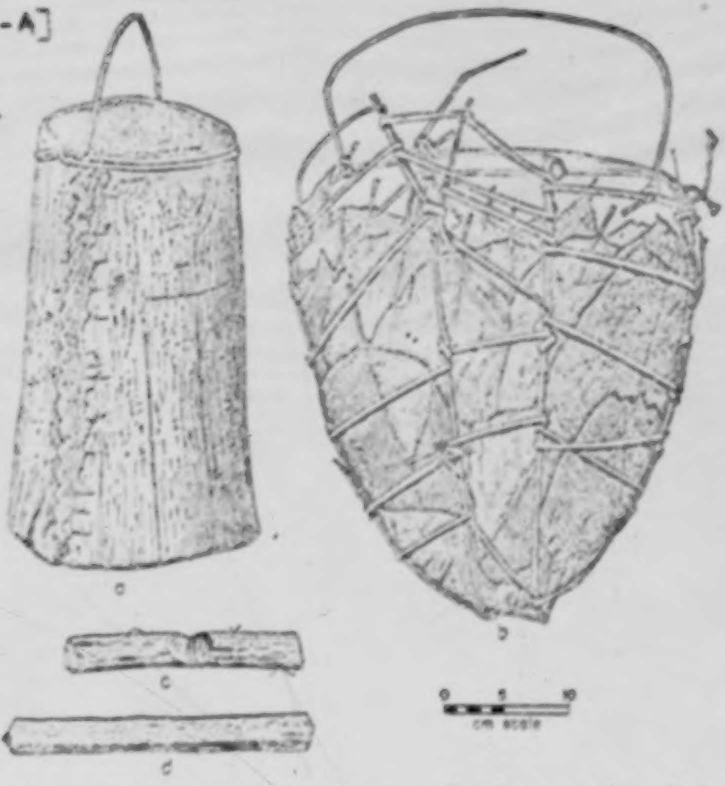

[534]

Fig. 43. Gathering equipment, net hunters. a. Bark honey container, *ebimba*, Epulu District, Central Ituri. b. Vine-and-leaf honey container, *apayabisi*, West Nduye District, Central Ituri. Normally the bark container is used, but if the Mbuti come across honey unexpectedly, they improvise a container of leaves supported by vine strands. This may be found among both archers and net hunters. c-d. Clappers, *ngbengbe*, used exclusively by the Mbuti during the honey season to accompany honey songs, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

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[NET HUNTERS]

Games and pastimes are the same as those for the archers, with the addition of a form of spear practice. A large forest fruit is fixed to the end of a vine which is swung around in a circle. Men standing in a group surrounding the swinger throw their spears as the fruit comes past them, dashing in to retrieve the weapons that miss. 526 [84]

Legend telling, like dance and song, is an important medium of expression as well as recreation. 538 Instrumental music among this group of Mbuti is virtually nil. 534 533 In a hunting camp a *lukembi* (*sanza*) may be heard, a musical bow, and possibly, though rarely, a notched flute. If the camp is near a village the men may borrow or steal a drum for the dance; otherwise, they use sticks as clappers, either shaved at the end to give a flat sound, or left smooth to give a sharp, hollow sound. The women add to the rhythm with handclaps, and both sexes with stampings of the feet.

There are two kinds of secular dance, erotic and imitative, as described by Schebesta. The third kind of dance described for the archers, 535 [831] [372] [84]

[p 212-D]

[NET HUNTERS]
[P. 213-A]

535 the dance through fire, is reserved for special re-
[372] ligious occasions among the net hunters. Secular
[84] dancing takes place at any time of the day, any
day, but nearly always there is dancing in the evening, and, when the moon gives enough light, the dance may continue through most of the night. Except for the religious dances, men, women, and children take part in the dancing together.

Song is even more important to the net hunt-
533 ers. There is not much information in the Putnam material, except that different types of song exist for men and for women and for different occasions, but from my own observations among this group there are, as with dance, clearly two major divisions. One is between secular and sacred, and the other is between songs proper to men and songs proper to women. Certain songs are sung only by members of the men's religious association, the *molimo* (Schebesta: *lusomba*), and those proper to members of the women's association, the *elima* (Schebesta: *elimo*). Then there are songs for hunting and songs for gathering. Each of these

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533 four types of song can be distinguished by its musical form alone, but its performance is not necessarily limited to the appropriate occasion. Thus a *molimo* song may be sung around the campfire in the evening without the *molimo* association's necessarily holding a formal meeting, which would exclude the presence of women. Similarly, honey-gathering songs may be sung well out of honey season. A fifth group, play songs, is associated with children's games and mothers' lullabies.

512 Singing, dancing, and story telling may continue late into the night unless it is raining. Families retire to their huts as they feel inclined, but throughout the night there is nearly always a small group of men or boys around the main fire, warming themselves or smoking. This is where the bachelors generally sleep.

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Conception and Childbirth

184 The general information given by Schebesta for the archers applies to the net hunters also. 845 Putnam has, however, recorded a number of difficult births, and Mrs. Putnam witnessed various measures taken to overcome complications. On one occasion a Pygmy woman was in labor for 36 hours in a village. Villager and [177] Pygmy women came and tried their own individual remedies, including filling the ears and

[P. 213-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

At [P. 216-C]
sundown they return to their hut, which they enter, and start singing the special *elima* songs taught to the new initiates by the old woman in charge. The women of the camp sit outside and also sing, having armed themselves with whips made from the vine brought by the girls. 881 [533]

The menstruating girl will have sent word to her lover, who may be of the same band but must be of a different lineage. He must fight his way into the hut, through the women armed with whips and against the shower of missiles hurled at him by the girls of the *elima*. In the old days, say the Mbuti, the fighting used to be serious, and sometimes people were killed. The young man, if successful in gaining admission, had to pay an ax for the privilege of deflowering his maiden. He remained with her all night. The next day he was bound with vine and kept a prisoner in the *elima* hut until evening. He was then washed and rubbed with ashes and allowed to leave. [613] 881 836

From then onward any eligible young man (i.e., not of the same lineage as the girl) could try his luck. If he happened to be the husband of one of the women guarding the hut, she could [831] [613] [837]

[NET HUNTERS]

claim compensation *from* him. The women guardians also could make it easy or difficult for the candidates, according to their inclinations. Any man, having fought his way through, had to secure the girl's permission before he slept with her. But reliable Mbuti informants reported that a large number merely fought for the prestige acquired and sought no intercourse with the girls. Outwardly, there is no change, except that instead of firing arrows from their bows the men fire fruit peel, and the fighting is less severe than that described in the tales of olden times. Exactly what happens inside the hut is not known, but the festival is evidently an opportunity for young men to prove their valor, and for young maidens to prove their womanliness, each one attesting to his or her readiness for marriage. There is unfortunately no evidence as to how far the opening of the *elima* constitutes a betrothal, nor how frequently it is followed by marriage. 881 836 [554]

During the course of the *elima* the girls are under certain food restrictions, which include a prohibition on all meat. *Elima* singing goes on all night. Presumably, as with the *nkumbi* initiation of boys, this is a period of discipline as well as of education. Apart from the special *elima* songs, apparently special dances are 881 [533] [535]

[P 216-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[NET HUNTERS]

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563 gifts, such as a few arrows. But it is also subject to settlement between the two villagers involved. This is formally accomplished by having a ceremony in the village according to village custom. [Both Putnam (MS) and

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585 Schebesta (1952, 238) mention the possibility of a double ceremony when it is a question of exchanging two brides rather than of effecting a "purchase."] Such ceremonies, belonging to the villager rather than the Mbuti, need not concern us here. It is worth noting, however, that, as with the village ceremony of *nkumbi* initiation, the Mbuti undergo the village marriage ceremony merely as a matter of convenience.

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[829] They pay no attention to its magical or religious significance, or to the taboos that would fall upon any villagers undergoing the same ceremony (though they may pay lip service to them in the presence of their patron). Fur-

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[535] ther, even during such a villager ceremony, the Mbuti have their own way of consecrating the union, both by introducing a dance with forest leaves, associated with the *elima* (the women's religious association), and by the singing of *elima* songs. In this way the young bride from the distant band is introduced to the association of her female companions-to-be.

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585 It is unlikely that the bride will be a complete stranger to the band, but even if so, she will be immediately befriended and will have willing helpers to make her first few days of

[P. 221-B]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 224-C]

Unlike the *molimo*, however, the *elima* usually calls for the joint participation of men and women both in song and in dance, which in this context are essentially means of religious expression. This joint participation is in no way connected with that aspect of the *elima* that involves the formal deflowering of the young maiden. 575 533 535 781

The *molimo*, as practiced by the net hunters, both from the Putnam material and from my own field notes, is strikingly different in manifestation from the description given by Schebesta (1952, 278) of the archers' *tori* association. I mention above the fact that the Putnam material places far more weight on the religious than on the social function of the *molimo*. We have also seen that participation in the *nkumbi* does not necessarily entitle the young Mbuti to take part in the *molimo* proceedings. The *molimo* is essentially an association of adult males; an adult male is a hunter, and one does not become a hunter by being circumcised and learning a number of village songs and dances. 575 184 575 561 88

[NET HUNTERS]

ble then that there may be different types of 534
instrument, but evidently not used in conjunction.
Anne Putnam further mentions having
heard sounds that she took to be animal sounds
but that may in fact have been singing pots as
described by Schebesta (1952, 279). The only
instrument that she or her husband mentions,
however, is the trumpet, and no description of
it is given.

This instrument is an essential part of the 534
proceedings; its use marks the difference between 575
two grades of *molimo* meeting. A meeting 796
in which the trumpet is not used does not carry
the significance that one with the trumpet does.
There is no information as to exactly when it is
used and when not, but it is recorded that the
trumpet is heard during meetings following
death, during serious illness, or during some
crisis affecting the welfare of the band as a
whole. It is frequently associated with song, accompanied [533]
by split-stick clappers, *banja* (Fig.
57) that are apparently peculiar to the *molimo*.

A third grade of meeting is that from which 533
women and children are not excluded, during 575
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[P 225-C]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.226-A]

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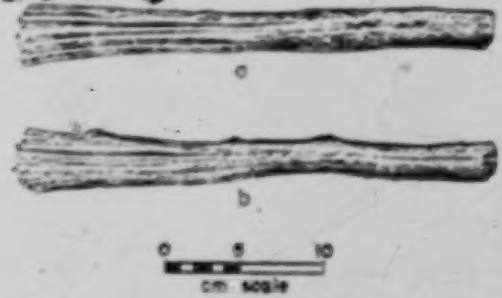

FIG. 52. Split clappers, *banja*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

533 which *molimo* songs may or may not be sung.
575 Such a meeting may be said to be religious, in
776 that it is known by all that the songs effect
[776] some kind of communion with the God of the Forest, but they are not held with any specific purpose. After an evening meal the men sit together around the main fire, talking and smoking. The subject of conversation may take a serious turn, or there may simply be a long silence during which one or another of the men starts singing. In either case someone quite spontaneously starts singing a *molimo* song, and the others join in. At such times the women and children remain sitting, as is their habit, around their individual fires outside their huts; they

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are not expected to retire to their huts. Only if the singing develops a certain turn do they retreat. They know that certain songs have more significance than others, and, on hearing these, they retire. It is unusual, however, for an ordinary meeting of the men to develop to this extent.

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Usually the trumpet is heard at about the time the band normally retires for the night. The women in any case have been aware of whatever crisis is the occasion for the meeting and are prepared for it. On hearing the trumpet, they take their children and shut themselves in their huts. None will come out, even to cross the clearing. The men sit close together around one of the fires. As they sing, the *molimo* trumpet echoes their song, sometimes coming close, sometimes going far away into the forest. The *molimo* may come right into the camp itself and install itself, unseen, close to where the men are sitting. [535] At a given point the men may suddenly start dancing through the fire, scattering the ashes and cinders to all sides. Shortly afterwards the participants go to bed. The singing may last only two or three hours, or may con-

[P.226-B]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 226-C]

tinue until first light, according to the Putnam 575
material. Once a meeting is begun, it may continue 796
nightly for as long as a month. It is obligatory [533]
for all members to attend, and those [534]
who are away visiting return to take part. Visitors [574]
in the camp also take part if they qualify
as hunters. Men, and more particularly youths, [292]
sometimes improvise headdresses of cane and
feathers (Fig. 50), similar to those worn by village
men and women during initiation festivities.
Putnam says that food may be prepared
for the men by a woman (it is not known who),
but that she never appears and has no other
function in the proceedings.

In my own experience the words of the songs 575
that are sung by the *molimo* are not supplicatory 796
but are mainly repetitions of one or other 533
of the names of the God of the Forest, or affirmations 776
of his goodness and omnipotence. The
songs are, nonetheless, effective means, as far as
the Mbuti are concerned, of securing an end to
the crisis. The purpose of these meetings is undoubtedly [182]
to restore the normality to a community
which in some way or another has deviated.

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There is, however, some evidence that indicates another usage of the *molimo* society, more in accord with Schebesta's interpretation of its social function. Anne Putnam reports having once been in a hunting camp when there was some commotion, fairly early in the evening, and the women shouted that the *molimo* was coming. All the women and children promptly fled to their huts and shut themselves in, with much loud complaining. Shortly afterward, the trumpet was heard in the distance and then, closer at hand, the sound of a chicken being killed, which evidently called forth a renewed burst of anger from the women. The men in the camp started singing, and the women became quiet. The singing lasted until nearly dawn. In the morning it was explained to Mrs. Putnam that the *molimo* had taken a chicken and would not pay. "But that is the way of the *molimo*," explained her male informant.

That evening a basket appeared in the camp, hung up in a prominent place, filled with plantains—a gift for the *molimo*. Members were able to help themselves from the basket, and the women were expected to keep it filled. After all the women had gone to bed, the men started singing, although they had said that they were not going to sing that night. As the singing

[P. 226-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

[p. 227-A]

575 reached a climax (drums were being used, un-
533 usual for a religious meeting of the *molimo*),
534 the trumpet arrived. Anne Putnam heard one
782 of the hunters say, "We shall give the *molimo* a
796 present tonight." Another said that there was nothing to give. Then one of the more important but younger hunters said, "We'll give it water." At this point Anne Putnam looked out and saw water being thrown over a figure that seemed to be white and that was playing the trumpet. The figure did not flinch and continued playing, while the hunter who suggested throwing the water laughed. Shortly afterward the trumpet left, and the men sang without the drums before going to bed.

During this same meeting of the *molimo*, the basket was kept filled with food for the men of the association. The singing went on each night, sometimes with drums, sometimes without. On some occasions the singing, particularly when there were no drums, appears to have been serious. At other times the meeting seems to have been more in the nature of a joke, as in the case of the water throwing, and on another occasion when the *molimo* kept moving about in the bush

[NET HUNTERS]

575 and refused to come to the camp. Some of the
533 men tried to find it, but, as they went after it,
534 it stayed silent for a while, then suddenly was
782 heard on the other side of the camp.

Anne Putnam gives one other instance of this
796 kind of meeting. While the evening meal was being eaten, the trumpet was heard and all the women had to shut themselves up. The trumpet approached the camp, and the men ran out to greet it, shouting and beating the drums. The trumpet came right into the clearing. Mrs. Putnam heard much shouting, drumming, hunting cries, and swishing of branches. The trumpet made a quick tour of the circle of huts and was then heard to disappear into the distance. The women were called out. The men were busy
[823] dancing. The women cooked a large meal, and the men all drank salt water so that they would sing well. They sang until about midnight. The trumpet was heard again for a short time early in the morning, in the distance.

575 The occasion for this *molimo* meeting, which
533 lasted about a month, was poor hunting. However, an old woman died during the month.
765 Anne Putnam was told that if the *molimo* had
796 not already been meeting, they would have had to call it out for this occasion. They also explained that the woman's death was the reason

[P. 227-8]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.227-C]

for the particularly long and intense singing at 575 533
that time. 765

I myself witnessed only one such meeting of 796
the *molimo*,[1] the occasion for which was not 575
clear and which took place down near the village. 534
One villager took part. The trumpet and 533
the performer, covered with a cloth, were carried 796
in from the forest on a crude litter and disappeared [114]
behind one of the huts. As the playing
and singing proceeded, the villager and one or
two Mbuti danced around the camp, tearing
leaves off the roofs of huts and placing them
against the door of the hut behind which the
trumpet was playing. There was much laughter,
but everyone spoke in low tones. Finally,
the player and trumpet were carried away as
they arrived, and everyone went to bed.

The other meetings of the *molimo* that I have 765
witnessed were of the more serious kind, following 533
the general disruption in the district among
villagers and Mbuti alike when Patrick Putnam
died. At these meetings no drums were used, [534]
even though they were sometimes available.
But even at such meetings there was generally [535]
a period, early in the night, during which the [831]
men started singing a *molimo* song that mocked
the womenfolk, accompanied by a mildly obscene
dance around the fire, with much laugh-

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ter. During this time the food was being cooked, 765
and the women were still chattering, though 533 •
shut up in their huts. After eating, and when all
the women were silent, the serious singing began.

Final mention should be made of the coincidence 575
of an *elima* initiation and a *molimo* meeting, 881
described by Anne Putnam. It is the custom 796
of the *elima* to sing through the night, as do 533
the boys of the initiation during the *nkumbi.*
When the women once found themselves rivaled
by some men singing the "hunting" *molimo,*
they competed but were sung down and finally
gave up. As soon as the sounds of the *molimo* [534]
trumpet died into the distance, however, the
women started up again. When it was a case of [765]
death, and serious *molimo* singing, the women
offered no competition.

It is told by these Mbuti that in the old days 173
the *molimo* was an animal that belonged to the 534
women, and all the men had to run away every 825
time they saw it. But then the men caught the 562

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[1] Subsequently I saw many more meetings of the *molimo* association (1960b, 1961) and its two different aspects were clarified and reconciled.

[P 227-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

In so far as the net hunters are much more likely to tell a legend than they are to discuss a question or expound a theory, legends are a valuable source that should be tapped, with the necessary cautions, to give us some insight into Mbuti rationalization as opposed to rationalization among the Mbuti. 538

ART

As among the archers, graphic art is limited to the decoration of the human body (notably the buttocks, legs, and face) and also of barkcloth. As mentioned above, the juice of the gardenia fruit is used for painting body designs, which Putnam says are for pure esthetic effect and of no magical significance. He believes, however, that some of the facial scarifications may indicate clan membership. No details are given. He adds that sometimes women name their designs; for example, a spotted design may be called "leopard." The design rests in the hands of the artist rather than of the subject. 302 531 [386] [824] [304]

Sometimes even head shaving is performed in such a way as to leave simple designs.

Some carving is now being done (Fig. 49) in imitation of village carvings. 532 177

As with the archers, music and dance are vitally important means of expression to the 533 • 535

[P. 233-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.234-A]

535 net hunters. They have not only social but
[533] also religious meaning. Schebesta's (1941, 252–253) classification of dances as sportive, mimetic, or erotic would also apply to the net hunters, with the addition of religious dances about which we know little. Also, like the archers, the net hunters separate the sexes in dance. There are circular and erotic dances which correspond almost exactly to Schebesta's (1941, 253–256) description of those of the archers.

53 If the band is near a village, they may borrow or steal drums, but the drum, resonant sticks, and handclaps are the only accompaniment (apart from song). A style of dance which uses an orchestra of eight or nine single-pitch bamboo pipes, much in vogue among the villagers, is sometimes copied by other Pygmies in the district. The players stand in a circle. Each player blows his pipe after his opposite number, forming a melodic line. The melodic line and the rhythm are altered by changing both the order of playing and the time lapse. The performers dance as they play and are joined in the dance by others. It is essentially the same style of dance as the *makata* (musical stick) dance seen at the time of *nkumbi*.

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[P. 234-C]

dance observed by Mrs. Putnam the man who 535
first speared the leopard was wounded but 224
nonetheless took part in the dance. The other 825
two men involved in the killing protected him as much as they could from their attackers and guarded him as he cut the leopard down. Onlookers said that he would not have been thought a coward if he had not taken part, because of his wounds, but he had chosen to do so.

Song, used in conjunction with dance, as 533
described by Schebesta, also has a separate function and operates as an art form in its own right. This, at first, Schebesta (1933, 301) denied, but later (1936b, 27; 1948, 259) he conceded the greater importance of song over dance. Among the net hunters there is a very clear division of song into four main categories, each of which can be distinguished by style and technique alone, and a fifth subsidiary category of play songs. The main categories are, as briefly mentioned above (p. 213), religious songs and secular songs, each subdivided according to sex, i.e., songs of the men's

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religious association (*molimo*) and of the women's religious association (*elima*); songs of the men's main economic activity (hunting) and of the women's (gathering). It is perhaps not quite justifiable to make the subdivision according to sex, as, in hunting and gathering among the net hunters, both sexes hunt. Most of the gathering songs concern honey gathering which is primarily a male occupation. Nor, in fact, does the classification into sacred and secular stand up to full scrutiny, as, in a sense, all songs are sacred as all are related to forest activities and the forest itself is sacred (pp. 258-259). 533 [778]

534 [184] Unlike the archers, the net-hunting Mbuti make extremely little use of musical instruments of any kind, except for the resonant sticks used in accompaniment to their forest songs. [48] For one thing, a truly nomadic group with only the most basic means of locomotion and transport, namely, the human body, can hardly afford to accumulate possessions beyond the absolute necessities—even less so with bulky nets as an additional item to be carried when camp is moved. Some net hunters know how to make and play notched end-blown flutes, with even greater skill and precision than the neighboring villagers, but they are rarely made. A *lukembi* (*sanza*) is the only instrument

[P. 234-D]

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.235-A]

534 that a Pygmy would think of carrying with him, as it is light, portable, and most easily concealed from the villagers from whom he probably stole it. There is no record that the net hunters make any instruments other than the flute and the resonant sticks, and possibly a special musical bow which is made just as is their hunting bow but larger and with a larger section of vine as the "string." Ordinary hunting bows are sometimes used as musical bows.

• 533 From the material on net hunters it seems that music is virtually exclusively vocal and that, apart from lullabies and some play songs, song involves chorus rather than solo work. Men and women join in song; sometimes they merely double each other's parts (as in the "secular" songs); at other times each takes different and complementary parts (*elima* songs). Certain *elima* songs and all *molimo* songs are sung only by adult women and men, respectively.

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171 Merriam (1953), in an examination of music from the Congo and Rwanda, writes that Congo music has four main characteristics: (1) lack of emphasis on percussion; (2) variety of instruments and styles; (3) heavy Arabic influence; and (4) considerable change currently in process.

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

531 This account of music among the villagers in
171 the Ituri Forest region is certainly accurate. In
contrast, the music of the Mbuti differs on each
533 one of these four points. Though the music of
171 the Mbuti of the Epulu District is here specifically
184 considered, it appears from all the known material, including Schebesta's work on the
archers and other Pygmy groups, that there is
remarkable uniformity of music among African
Pygmies, not confined to the Ituri or even the
533 Congo. Even in the absence of drums, extreme
534 percussive effects are obtained by resonant
184 sticks, handclaps, and foot stamps; some vocal
effects achieved by the Mbuti might also
properly be described as percussive. As noted,
[177] there is a lack of interest in instrumental
music, and styles are formalized; there is no
Arabic influence at all; there is no evidence
concerning change, except that up to now the
Mbuti have managed to preserve their distinctive
musical form in the face of strong
influences from all sides, which would seem to
indicate resistance to change.

53 As with the archers, song and dance both
overlap into the field of drama, and of the

[P. 235-B]

: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[P.250-C]

besta (1950, 80) mentions ceremonies performed P 224
by the archers themselves to "open" the forest. 177
There is no evidence of such a practice among 789
the net hunters, but they may call in a villager Z
for the purpose. But here we should consider 789
Pygmy acumen. If he has not been supplying 563
the villagers with meat for some time, yet has 177
been drawing supplies of bananas, he gives as P
his excuse the fact that the hunting has been [439]
poor. Such an excuse is safe enough, as the villagers
never accompany the Pygmies on a hunt.
Even if the villagers wait for them in the hunting
camp, the Pygmies see to it that they never
know how much game was actually caught. But
the Pygmy may seek to reinforce his position
by inviting the villager to improve the hunting.
In doing this, he is a step ahead of the villager,
who will himself insist on performing the ceremony
if hunting is persistently bad. As far as P
one can judge from casual conversation among 224
themselves after such a ceremony, the Mbuti 789
have little faith in it. Further, they have their 533 •
own method of dealing with any critical situation.
If the hunting is really bad they convoke
the *molimo*. In effect, they "sing" the hunting
well: there is no supplication and no prayer. The
song may or may not be accompanied by a
dance re-enacting a successful hunt, but, even
if so, the stress is laid on the song and the participation
of all the hunters.

The primary purpose of the *molimo* for the 575
Pygmies is to maintain and to restore normality 796
in the forest. (We must ignore its possible social 182
function at the moment because of insufficient 533
information.) It fulfills its purpose through song 534
and by the use of the *molimo* horn. The associa- [778]
tion may meet informally any evening as the
men sit around the main campfire. They may
sing *molimo* songs as well as hunting songs, but
the horn will not be heard. Women and children [562]
are not excluded from the group, though, as is [858]
their normal habit, they usually keep to their
own individual firesides. The association meets
formally following any crisis such as death,
serious illness, or exceptionally poor hunting.
Women and children are then rigidly excluded, [562]
and the *molimo* horn is used. These formal occa- [858]
sions compel the attendance of all members.
Adult members of the hunting band who are
away come back; adult male visitors to the
camp take part.

There is no formal body of magical belief and 789
practice among the net hunters, nor, according
to Schebesta (1952, 337), among the archers.
[p. 256-D]

[P. 257-A]

789 For the net hunters, the *molimo* is their only
595 means of dealing with the unknown, with situations
796 for which they have no practical, immediately effective remedy. Individuals may and do indulge in the spontaneous practice of sympathetic magic, but this is informal and unsystematized. The *molimo* (and the *elima* to a lesser extent) may be considered "magical" in that the meeting of the association in proper circumstances is believed to restore normality to a situation that has in some way deviated.
[562] The "proper circumstances" to which I refer
[858] seem to be the non-participation of women and
[885] children, the attendance of all adult male members
[533] of the band, the use of special songs and the *molimo* horn, persistence in nocturnal meetings of the association, and constant reiteration of the songs until normality is restored. As far
[784] as is known, although certainty is lacking, the meeting of the association, which may last for a month, is not accompanied by any taboos on hunting or gathering, eating, or sexual activity.
[562] Some doubt exists also as to the position of women with regard to the *molimo*.

796 If this is magic, it is totally different from the
776 kind of magic practiced by the villagers, for
778 which the Mbuti reserve an attitude of skeptical
cal amusement. Whatever it is, it shows a very
782 different attitude to the forest from that of the
575 villagers. My interpretation of the *molimo*,
[829] from the meetings I have attended and the conversations
I have overheard, is that it is an
association of hunters that has the power of
making itself heard by the God of the Forest.
This God is referred to by many different
names, even within the same band, and, as
frequently as not, is simply referred to as "The
Forest," also, though less often, as "Father"
and "Grandfather." The association must fulfill
[533] the conditions listed above in order to make
[534] itself heard; the *molimo* horn used in conjunction
with song is the focal point of the meetings.
[562] Women and children are presumably excluded,
because hunting, the most important of all
[858] activities to the Mbuti and regarded by him as
such, is primarily the province of men, and the
God of the Forest is also God of the Hunt.[1] The
dominant note of the meetings is unanimity
and insistence. All hunters must attend. They
sit in a tight group around the fire as if by this

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[1] It might be expected that, as the net hunt involves cooperation between both sexes, the women would have some part to play in the *molimo* among net hunters, at least.

[p. 257-c]

physical disposition they are emphasizing their 796
unity. Their means of communication are spe- 776
cial songs, as mentioned in the survey, sacred to 778
the *molimo*. These songs are not phrased in 782
terms of explicit supplication. They merely call 575
on the God of the Forest by constant repetition 796
of his name (frequently changing from one 776
name to another, it seems for the sake of variety 778
and euphony), and an occasional recitation of 782
his qualities as the source of all good in the 533
Mbuti life is given. This song is echoed by the 575
molimo horn, which is far off in the forest, though it may, in the course of the meeting, visit the camp. The song is picked up by the lone performer who follows it, singing it into the horn, passing it on still farther into the forest, finally letting it die away into the distance.

In this way the Mbuti make sure that their song is heard. Sung in this way, the song itself rouses their God from an apparent state of sleep or detachment, bringing him to a consciousness of the plight of his children. This, for the Mbuti, is sufficient. There is no attempt to ask for favors. The God of the Forest is the source of all that is good and bad, so that, as long as he is conscious of what is happening, the Mbuti are content. But they say that sometimes he sleeps, and when he is asleep things come to pass that might have been prevented had he been awake. The *molimo* makes sure he is awake.

With the *elima* it is similar. All adult women 575
are members, and participation is compulsory 796
in one's own camp or when visiting another. [885]
Communication with the forest God is again
established by means of songs, special and sacred [533] •
to the *elima*. However, the men take part. [776]
The *elima* meets on occasions of major concern [778]
to womenfolk—birth, arrival at the age of puberty, marriage, and death. Thus at birth and death, both the *elima* and the *molimo* are concerned. (As mentioned, however, the occasion of birth is little marked by ritual of any kind.) Both associations meet in the forest camp but out of sight of each other. The *elima* meets in the large *elima* hut or in a cluster of neighboring
huts. Young children may be present. The exception, [858]
when the men take part in the meeting of the *elima*, is during the initiation of a girl.

In the survey we give an account of *elima* 881
initiation (p. 216). If the *nkumbi* is not the initiation 885
into the *molimo*, we must look elsewhere 224
for this. When a boy kills his first "real animal," 575
he is immediately acclaimed as a hunter, and

[P 257-D]

The function of these asso- 575
ciations[1] is to regulate the relationship of these 182
Mbuti with their forest world, to maintain the 796
normality of that relationship and to restore it 778
when disturbed, by rousing the God of the Forest 776
from his sleep by song, echoed into the forest 533 •
by means of the *molimo* horn in the case of
formal meetings of the men's association. This
god is the source of good and bad, and it is
therefore sufficient to waken him. There is no [782]
formal supplication phrased in words as such.

The *molimo* and *elima* are distinct from village 575
association with similar names and from 177
whatever association it is into which the *nkumbi*
initiates the villagers. Mbuti participation in
the *nkumbi*, as in other village ceremonies, is
part of the mutual attempt of two peoples
forced together by historical reasons and present
territorial juxtaposition to regularize their
relationship, each to his own satisfaction. Trade [439]
is another such expression of their relationship;
it is not the basis of it. Further, participation in [881]
the *nkumbi* involves an opposition between two [554]
sets of values (those of the villagers and those [171]
of the Mbuti taking part), as *nkumbi* initiation [181]
does not qualify the Mbuti for entry into his
own religious association nor accord him any
status in his own society. It enables him to
move as an adult in villager society and gives
the two peoples some common ground involving
a superficially subordinate position for the
Mbuti.

1. [Molimo and Elima associations
--Analyst]

[p. 258-C]

Finally, it is worth taking very brief note of the function of music among the net-hunting Mbuti in so far as it throws light on their participation in the *nkumbi* and village society in general. 533 182

Music in the forest is almost entirely vocal. Drums may be used if within easy reach of the village, from which they are borrowed or stolen. [534] But drums are never used for formal meetings of the *molimo* and *elima*; rhythm is given out by wooden clappers. None of this song can be said to be secular, as it is all related to the forest. The extreme importance attached to song is most plainly seen in its usage for the *molimo* and *elima*. It is mentioned above in the survey how the Mbuti consecrate a marriage ceremony that is performed in the village according to villager custom, by singing the songs of the *elima*, welcoming the bride to the women's religious association in her new home. We also see how the *elima* songs mark the arrival of Mbuti girls at the age of puberty. *Molimo* songs mark

[P 258-D]

[P. 259-A]

533 any major crisis affecting the community as a
182 whole. But, as well as these religious activities,
both major economic activities, hunting and
gathering, are also consecrated by special types
of song. It is inconceivable that the Mbuti, who
accompany every important event in their lives
with song, should not consecrate the initiation
533 of their boys in this same way. But for the
881 *nkumbi* they have no music at all. As we have
182 said, in 1954 the *molimo* horn was not heard,
and no *molimo* songs were sung. I suggest that
other initiations, in which the horn and songs
are heard, are in connection with villager institutions
to which the village boys are being initiated.
The only conclusion we can draw is that
for the Mbuti the *nkumbi* is not sufficiently significant
in their forest life to merit consecration
by forest song.

533 This is closely paralleled by the absence of
182 forest music (songs of the *molimo* and *elima*,
hunting-and-gathering songs) when the Mbuti
181 are camped on the edge of a village. When they
do, the Mbuti themselves behave as different
people. In the forest they feel and observe a
[778] certain restraint. Their songs are related to and
emphasize their supreme value—the forest.
Their daily activities are dominated by the forest
and the hunt and the need for close cooperation.

533 tion. Once in the village, however, forest values
177 are cast off. Interpersonal relationships become
looser; the hunting band as such disintegrates
178 into so many individual families; forest norms
18 of behavior are cast to the winds; forest song is
[621] abandoned. Drum-dance replaces forest music
entirely. This is the type of dance and music described by Schebesta (1941, 245). It is never heard in a forest hunting camp among the net hunters, only in the neighborhood of the village. It seems that the Mbuti regard the village primarily as a place for eating, drinking, and making merry, free from the rigors, however pleasurable, of forest life. These rigors demand periods of relaxation. I have suggested that the honey season was once a major holiday season for the Mbuti but that visits to the village are now taking its place.

177 Through their relationship with the villagers,
18 the Mbuti find an opportunity for relaxation,
an excursion into the profane world, a period of
533 license which ends, however, in a re-alignment
and re-affirmation of the values of their own sacred world of the forest, all quite dramatically seen in the way in which a visit to the vil-

[P. 259-B]

[P. 259-C]

lage often comes to an end. After a few days or 177
weeks of drinking and dancing, one evening the 18
drum-dance is replaced by song, probably a 533 •
subdued hunting song sung by a group of dejected-looking Pygmies sitting around a fire in
their village camp. They get increasingly mel- [152]
ancholy until one evening, probably a day or two after they have stopped drum-dancing, they start singing *molimo* songs. The next morning they are suddenly full of life again, and, despite all protests from the villagers, they pack their few belongings and return to the forest, singing loudly as they go.

The evidence considered suggests that there 177
is a dissociation of two sets of values for the 18
Mbuti—those that apply to the village and 121
those that apply to the forest. The two sets of values, corresponding to two worlds, are accompanied by two modes of behavior. It is a case of culture contact without acculturation; such villager institutions as the Mbuti seem to adopt are adopted and are significant only with reference to their village life. The relationship between the two people is, on the one hand, characterized by various attempts to formalize it through trade, participation in various ceremonies and activities, and, on the other hand, it is characterized by a sharp opposition of two different sets of values. This opposition is an opposition of the forest to the non-forest; the humans, to the animals; the Mbuti, to the villagers.

538 776 Whatever their nature, the essential thing is that, in counteracting *satani* danger the Pygmy in his behavior is absolutely pragmatic. He uses his spear or his bow and arrow and his cleverness. At most the Pygmy will use the common belief in *satani* as an explanation of some minor mishap, the real explanation of which he probably knows but is not willing to admit (carelessness during the hunt, failure while looking for honey, and so on). The belief in *satani* is never used to explain anything more. Yet it is the only common belief of this kind. We are undoubtedly faced, as the legends themselves indicate, with a people with no standard body of magical belief and practice. [789]

It will need further field work and analysis to determine the connection here between myth and magic.

533 771 772 I mention one further factor, which in a way may be said to be magical, and that is the power of song. Yet it is so unlike magic in the accepted sense of that term (with connotations of witchcraft and sorcery) that I do not feel it affects the foregoing hypothesis. Here we enter another world, mentioned again and again in the legends. Unlike the world of animals and *satani*, with which the Pygmy can cope by cultivating cleverness, this world is one in which at first it seems that he has no such weapon. This is perhaps more truly the "supernatural." This is the world of water animals and

[P. 271-B]

[P. 271-C]

rainbows, of streams where strange things happen, of birds and beautiful songs. (It is also, oddly enough, a world of vine swings.) 533 771 772

However one might quibble about the meaning of the term "evil" and its applicability to animals and villagers, it most assuredly seems to have no place at all in this last world, any more than cleverness or trickery. We return again to the value of normality. We have a fusion of the normal and the supernatural that is difficult to grasp, but in which, I believe, lies the key to the magico-religious system of these Mbuti. It is difficult to determine the exact significance of the part birds play in the legends in the last section, but there is no doubt that the Mbuti associate them in some way with what I am now forced to call the "supernormal" world, that unknown world that lies beyond death. To conclude, I would like to refer to the legend of the Bird with the Beautiful Song, which I mention above. [825] 533 538

The curious thing about this legend, and the many variant forms in which the theme is repeated, is the emphasis on the song. Sometimes the narrator sings; these are rare moments that are not easily forgotten and far less easily ex- 789

plained. But there is a feeling, and I cannot say 533
that it is more than that, that song has power. 538
The song may have no words; it may be a mix- 789
ture of meaningless sounds; but plainly it is esthetically satisfying to the Mbuti. These wordless songs are among the most powerful. When the father killed the bird, he killed the song, and he dropped down dead, completely dead, dead forever. In real life, also, song is powerful. Membership in the religious associations of the women and the men gives the Pygmy the right to take part in the singing of songs peculiar to those associations. In fact, it imposes a duty to do so. The songs are distinguished not by their content but by their musical style and the technique of performance. It is the *sound*, rather than the word content, that matters. These songs are sung, in their most powerful form, only on occasions of the greatest distress, such as sickness or death of one of the great hunters, or failure in the chase. These are departures from normality. It has been my contention from an analysis of the function of music among the Mbuti that song is believed to restore that normality.

As well as several more obvious differences 538
from villager values, such as emphasis by the 171
[P. 271-D] 181

PLATE 37[1]

MUSICAL BOW, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

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[516]

Mbuti music is almost entirely vocal, the voice being accompanied by wooden clappers. The musical bow is used sometimes to accompany the telling of legends or simply for personal amusement. As here, it is most often simply the hunting bow, tapped with an arrow, the mouth acting as a resonator.

[1], /Plate 37 appears on page 307--Analyst/

[P. 306]

PLATE 38[1]

535 GIRLS' HOOP DANCE, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

533 Dance, together with song, forms the major outlet of artistic expression for the Mbuti.
796 The line between sacred and secular is almost non-existent. The hoop dance is used by girls
881 and women to celebrate the *elima*, or puberty, of one of their number, but it may be seen
517 also as an idle moment in almost any day. Words of accompanying songs are nearly invariably in praise of the forest.

[1] /Plate 38 appears on page 309--Analyst/

[P.308]

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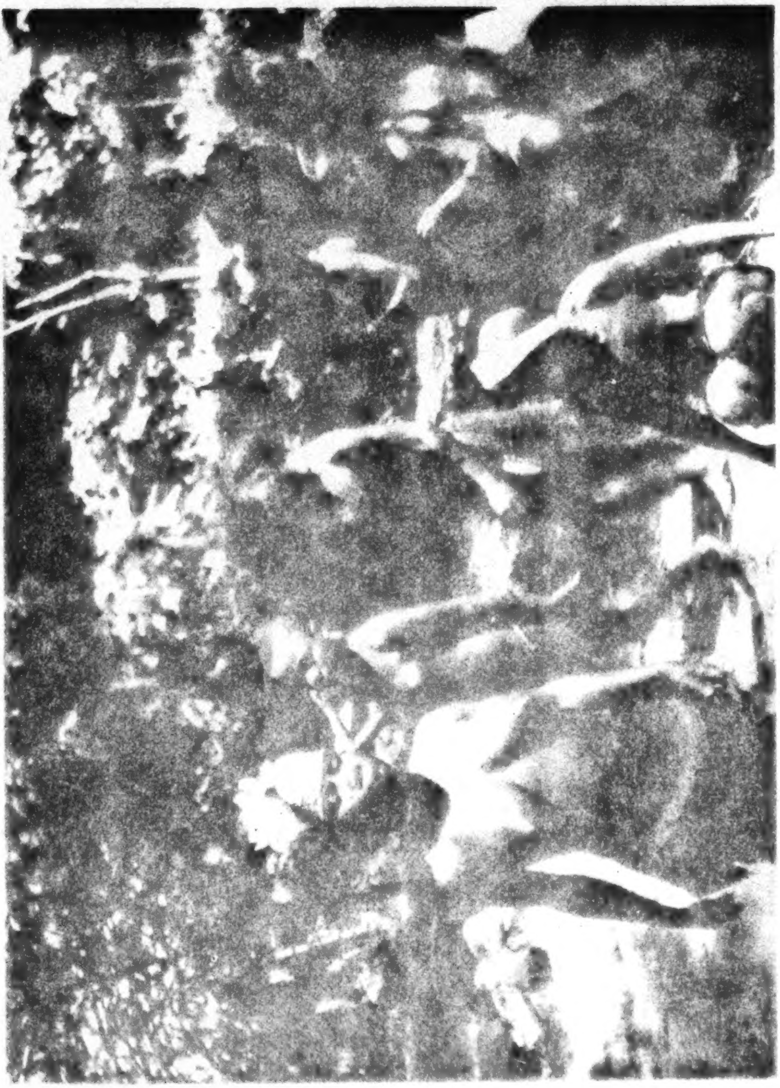

[P309]

/Plate 38/
/Caption appears on p.308/

tainly not be countenanced by the *kpara* concerned. This is only one C 881
indication of the lack of respect with which the Mbuti view the 608
nkumbi, and it is important that this be understood at the outset. [582]
The structural implications of the *nkumbi* as they apply to the vil- 881
lagers in no way apply to the Mbuti. I had graphic evidence of this 608*
when following recently initiated Mbuti youths back to their forest 177 [582]
hunting camp at the conclusion of the two-month ceremony. They C
had just been acclaimed as men by the villagers, and allowed to take (192)
their place as men in the village *baraza*, or meeting place. But their
first act on entering the hunting camp was to sit on the laps of their
mothers as an indication that they still considered themselves as chil-
dren in the forest world. I might further mention that the Mbuti, who P
in the forest consecrate every activity of major importance with a [533] ●
special type of song, have no song whatsoever for the occasion of the
nkumbi. Further arguments are given elsewhere (Turnbull, 1957[2]).
Here we are concerned with villager attempts to secure control, and
it is only necessary to indicate the two different attitudes to the
nkumbi, and its evidently different significance for the Mbuti in the
forest world.

However the Mbuti might deny the village attitude to the *nkumbi*, C
and the villagers are aware that such denial does take place, the vil- 881
lagers nonetheless see a number of advantages accruing to them in 769
their admission of the Mbuti to the tribal initiation ceremony. 563 186

First, as the *nkumbi* fits a youth to go to the ancestors after death, P
the ceremony serves as an introduction of the Mbuti to the afterworld 881
of the village. By undergoing the *nkumbi* they equally are fitted to go, 177*
after death, to the world of the village ancestors. But it is made plain 186
throughout that the status relationship remains unchanged. Mbuti and village boys are circumcised alternately on the day of the cutting, which opens the ceremony proper. The Mbuti boy is generally sent first—"to clean the knife"—and throughout he is made, in innumerable ways, to recognize that in village eyes he is inferior to the village boys.

KARÉ

C
The pairs of boys, one Mbuti and one villager, whose blood has been 608 571
allowed to mingle, are called *karé*. The degree of formality with which P
the *karé* relationship is solemnized varies considerably from village 60[illegible]
to village, and depends to some extent upon the proportion of Mbuti 17[illegible] 571

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

1C

oughly as possible, it seems that among both Bira and Ndaka, and I 765 believe also among the Lesé, death is believed to put fellow clansmen [192] of the deceased in great danger from the *keti*, or evil spirits. The object [776] of the *molimo* is twofold, then; it must help the deceased on his way, giving him what protection it can, and it must protect the living, who will be in a state of ritual danger throughout the period of mourning.

During that period the *molimo* meets regularly, at nighttime, in the house of the senior surviving member of the clan, in whose possession C [533] the *tete* is held. Only adult male clansmen are admitted, and the sound of the *tete* is the audible evidence of the invisible presence C of their totemic guardian spirit. Specially prepared food is offered to [782] the spirit, and the rest is eaten by the men. No women are allowed C to participate in any way, even by cooking the food, according to all 765 252 informants. However, I had been told the same thing about the 562 Mbuti and found it to be different, and do not accept this information without some reservation. It would seem, though, that women generally are excluded from the *molimo* of the villagers, and indeed it really is no concern of theirs.

During the proceedings, which may last an hour or so, the men C 765 wail and call out the name and/or the kinship term of address of the [769] deceased; his praises are recited and he is commended to the ancestral spirits. At the same time, the praises of the surviving clan members are similarly recited, and mention is made of the way in which they have upheld tribal lore and observed all the rules of clan exogamy, and have increased the number of attendant Mbuti. Continued protection for the living is requested, particularly for the period of C mourning. Apparently no Mbuti take part in this part of the ceremony, [563] though there seemed to be some disagreement over this and P my impression was that the associated Mbuti are not prohibited from [177]* attending, but effectively seldom, if ever, do.

Upon the death of an Mbuti the *kpara* will not only oversee the C 764 burial and funerary ceremonies and divination, he will also want to 765 hear announced the calling together of the men of the *molimo*. Sometimes 563 he will leave it at that, but if the Mbuti continue to stay in the 571 village and hold any *molimo* meetings in their village camp, the 764 *kpara* may attend one or two meetings. It is very noticeable that when 765 he does, the meeting runs a completely different course, centering 177* 571 around some erotic dancing by the younger men and a small amount [535] of singing. The *molimo* trumpet, which is the Mbuti counterpart of [533] •

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

P The molimo trumpet, which is the Mbuti counterpart of
765 the villager *tele*, may be heard growling in a noncommittal manner, as
*177 if uncertain which clan totem to imitate from the diversity of clans
534 undoubtedly represented at the Mbuti *molimo* fire. It seems that the
• 533 most common sound for the instrument to make under such circumstances is the growl of a leopard, which safely covers all clans, Mbuti and villager.

P However, the villagers are not made welcome, and if it were any
765 but the *kpara* or his representative the *molimo* would be abandoned
*177 the moment a villager approached. As it is, on the few occasions
648 when I have seen a *kpara* attend, he was not offered any food or any
571 other inducement to stay, the *molimo* trumpet remained out of sight
C 765 the whole time and only growled indistinctly once or twice; the sing-
563 ing was sporadic and only the young men were active, dancing around
648 the fire.

571 The Mbuti said that the villagers were afraid and would not in any case be likely to come near; the *kpara* only did it because he felt obliged to. In all cases of which I have any experience, except two instances where a brief *molimo* was held in a village camp for an Mbuti child who died there, the Mbuti *molimo* is held at nighttime in the forest, where interference from the village would be unthinkable. As with the *elima*, however, the closing stages are often held in the village, this being meant to coincide with the end of the official period of mourning and therefore the signal for a feast to be supplied by the villagers.

P It does seem significant, nonetheless, that the Mbuti should sing
*177 any *molimo* songs in the village camp, for normally they refuse to
533 sing any of their true forest songs when in the village. However, they
[765] are sung infrequently, with marked restraint, and widely separated by long snatches of songs that I never heard in the forest or, unfortu-
P nately, in the villages. The latter bore a distinct resemblance to certain
[881] songs taught during the *nkumbi*, and some were undoubtedly variants on *nkumbi* songs. The only information I could get was they were not "songs of the forest" but were "songs of the village." The villagers confirmed that they heard the Mbuti sometimes singing village *molimo* songs, and surprise was expressed that they would sing anything else, for everything else was *bulé*, empty.

C The connection between the *molimo*, as performed by the Mbuti
765 in the village, and the *nkumbi* was made all the more evident when
881 on one *molimo* occasion the two members of the *kpara's* family stood
563 up and performed a dance only seen otherwise in the initiation camp.
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P
*177 sleep in the *baraza* of the villagers rather than in the village camp).
182 The nuclear family is further disrupted by the fact that a wife may
621 well seize the opportunity of being in the village to leave her husband
593 and visit her own *kpara* in another village.
594

P
C Men and women of quite different ages who would normally, in
[608] the forest, be separated for most aspects of daily life may find them-
[571] selves thrown together. Young and old are quite likely to find them-
P selves eating together on the same *baraza,* helping to build the same
182 house, even joining in the same erotic dance. Sex differentiations that
621 pertain in the forest do not necessarily pertain in the village, where,
561 for instance, Mbuti men do the housebuilding, not the women, and
462 where the women are most effectively the "hunters" and food producers.

P It is only, as stated, when the two worlds of the forest and the
648 village impinge upon each other that the Mbuti in the village camp
621 show any sense of identity as a unit. Those who belong to the same
186 hunting band will then cluster together around the same campfire,
and if the issue involves a return to the forest, then quickly the village
camp begins to assume, so far as possible, the composition and characteristics of a forest camp. Forest relationships between individuals
and families are gradually reestablished, and at the same time village
P relationships are gradually abandoned. This inevitably meets with
648 concerted opposition on the part of the villagers, who offer threats
166 and bribes to maintain the precarious and temporary relationship just
C established. But with no effective means of control there is nothing
563 they can do but accept the departure of "their" Mbuti with as much
[431] good grace as they can muster. Those who are wise make presents of
plantains and manioc. Those who do not are likely to have their
plantations robbed.

P The imminence of a mass return of Mbuti to the forest is fre-
• 533 quently marked a night or two before it takes place by the singing
186 in the village camp of hunting songs or, on special occasions, of the
621 lesser *molimo* songs, late at night when all the villagers will have retired. This is a sure sign that the forest world is asserting itself, for forest songs are generally considered as sacred, and not to be profaned by performance in the village. They would never be sung in the true village, and only in the Mbuti village camp when they wish to convert the context to a forest context. The forest, it must be remembered, is physically always within sight and, perhaps more important as far as song is concerned, within earshot. It may, indeed, be no more than

P 533

a few yards away, and some village camps, depending upon the circumstances, 186
are actually built still in the shade of the forest, out of 621
sight of the village and its plantations.

But granted this separation of the two worlds, and the fact that P C
when the band (or part of it) comes to the village it disintegrates as 121
such, and if we accept the lack of any economic necessity or political 648
force by which we could explain the relationship, we still have to answer the question as to why a relationship exists and what its true nature is.

This can best be answered after we have seen the nature of the C 648
forest world, but it can already be seen that the meeting of the two 121
peoples is somewhat like the meeting of two polar opposites that are 177
irresistibly drawn together. And indeed, such magnetic links between P
opposites are the only true ones we have found. The point at which 648
the forest and the village truly meet, the focal point of the relation- 177 *
ship between the two peoples, is not economic or political, but reli- 121
gious. The nature of the meeting is one of opposition, and this opposition is most clearly expressed in the mutually antagonistic systems of values. Although we have only concerned ourselves with the village world to this point, we have already seen the strength of the village fear of the forest, resulting in their unwillingness to enter it
and their consequent "dependence" upon the Mbuti for necessary P
forest products. This fear is expressed in religious terms by reference C
to the hostile forest spirits, and the general antagonism of the forest [771]
to the village world, witnessed by its reluctance to support village
crops. Insofar as the villagers recognize the Mbuti as a forest people C
they believe them to be somehow aligned with the forest spirits, and [776]
therefore to be placated. That does not prevent the villagers from C
attempting, while placating, to extend some form of control over the [626]
Mbuti. Indeed they seem far more concerned about this than they are about the small amount of meat or labor they manage to extract from the Mbuti (see Table 3 for an example of "economic" exchange).

The Mbuti most nearly fall under village control through their own fear of the village (which by its very nature is not only not "of the forest" but is actively hostile to the forest), and through their fear of the powers the villagers claim to have over the supernatural, by witchcraft and sorcery. Quite apart from the historic genesis of the Mbuti/Villager relationship, the very antagonism of their ways of life, together with their territorial propinquity, would be enough to de-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

[P.108-I]

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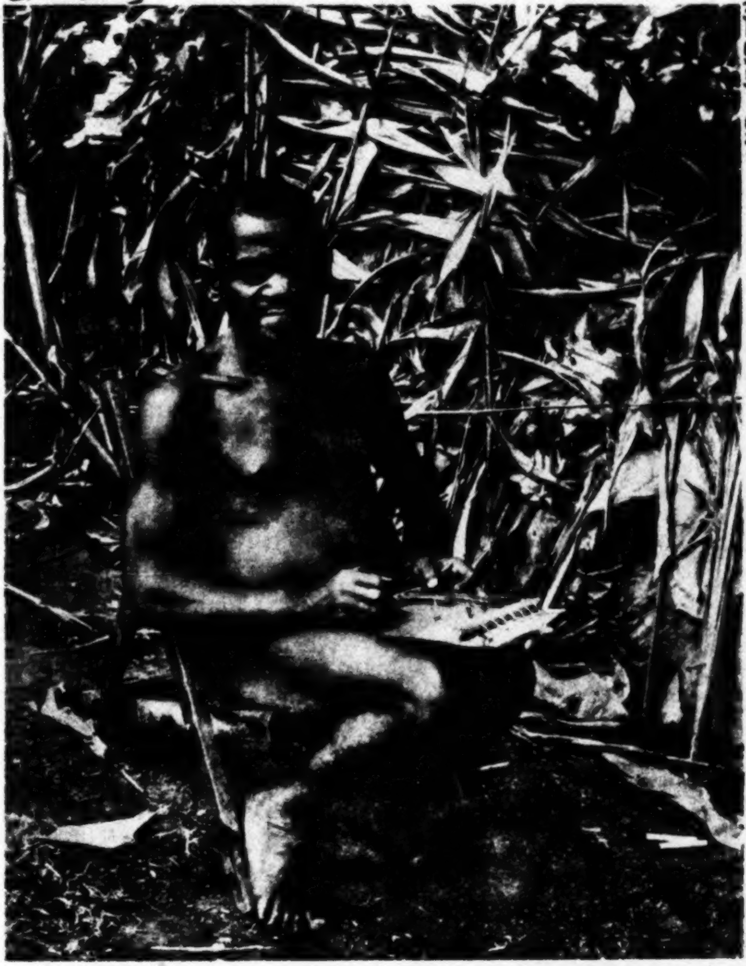

11. An Mbuti hunter amuses himself in the village by playing a village-made zither.

Youths also have considerable say in the settling of any dispute 561
concerning betrothal, though ultimately it is the *mangesé* who decide 627
such matters. The hunters control all activities concerning the hunt
and the movement of camp. The *mangesé* act as general arbiters and [888]
are effectively a court of final appeal, their age entitling them to unquestioning respect. Particularly in matters concerning betrothal 561
are the *mangesé* consulted, for their genealogical memory can be [582]
stretched to suit the occasion. And in the *molimo* festival, as in the [765]
elima, they share the honors with the youths: the hunters have to do most of the work, supplying the food and cooking it for the nightly or daily feasting, but the singing and dancing, which are central to the festivals, are led by the *mangesé* and the youths.

In matters concerning relationship with other bands, the band as 621
a whole, rather than any age group or association of age groups, decides 628
the issue. On such occasions even children will sit by and take 561
part.

We have already mentioned some of the religious functions of the 621
age groups, in association with their political functions, and it will 561
be seen that the two are closely interconnected. It might just be 765
pointed out here that in a *molimo* festival held for the death of an Mbuti, age-group and band membership take precedence over family membership. The youths will lead the dancing, and the leading youth [535]
will lead because he is the best dancer, not because he is related to
the dead person. Similarly with the singing led by the *mangesé*. The [533]
molimo horn may be supplied by anyone. The person who sings into it is generally a youth, though sometimes a young hunter, again regardless of kinship but on account of his renown and ability as a singer.

Considering the very clear roles of the age groups, and their com- 621
prehensive nature, it is plain that any unilineal system of descent 611
would be highly disruptive. The loose laws of marriage and adoption, 561
which are permissive rather than prescriptive, preferential or prohibitive, and the nonlineal nature of band composition allow for the flexibility that is obviously necessary to maintain the proper balance of recruitment into each age group.

Although a bilateral recognition of descent does exist and is some- 621
times utilized to provide the necessary balance of power, it can still 611
hardly be dignified by the term "lineage system." Owing to the non- [594]
lineal, territorial nature of band composition, and the frequency of sister exchange, nuclear families may divide or remain united, regardless of lineage, depending upon the context.

her milk dries up and the child is given to someone else to feed, or 846
if it is weaned early, then intercourse is apparently resumed. The third 853
father, however, while acknowledging this to be the accepted pattern,
began sleeping with his wife again within a month. This he did even
though he had the rare advantage for an Mbuti of having two other
wives. His action caused a major dispute. (See p. 207 *seq.*)

During pregnancy there are no restrictions; sexual activity in early 843
pregnancy is believed to hurry matters along, and during the latter
stages is merely considered uncomfortable, and possibly physically in-
jurious to the child and mother.

As the evening settles in, nuclear families sit around their family 512
hearths outside the huts, talking across the camp at each other until 521
they go inside to sleep, or simply lie down to sleep by the fire (the [594]
women nearly always sleep inside, but youths and men frequently
sleep on their hunting nets either by their own fire or by a central
fire). Even when families have retired inside their huts, conversation
continues between them. If there is any singing, other than of lul- [533]
labies, the camp divides into age groups, each building its own fire. [561]
Unless there is an *elima* or *molimo* festival, there is no marked di-
vision between the sexes.

On retiring for the night family hearths are brought inside the 512
huts, and any central fires are also brought inside unless someone is 354
sleeping by them. When a central fire is broken up, each family tends
to take an ember and add it to their own hearth. A fire is not left
untended at night. During the night a man may awaken and stoke
up a fire, warming himself by the blaze. At such times, when cold, [276]
the Mbuti smoke particularly heavily, and as a result they sometimes
fall unconscious. They may fall into the fire and suffer serious burns, [165]
occasionally fatal, and this is one of the few generally cited causes of
accidental death—other than falling from a tree.

On days when the hunt stays in the camp, because of rain or be- 512
cause some dispute has caused a rift, both men and women attend
to specific chores. Men repair and add to their nets and make new [462]
bows and arrows; the women roll twine and work at basketry. Both [287]
may make and decorate bark cloth, a major activity on such a day.
A good part of the day is always given to singing, dancing, playing
games and storytelling. There is a constant shifting from family 512
groupings to age groupings, but mealtime is the only time when there 264
is a definite emphasis on the nuclear family. Even then, male [594]
youths, hunters and elders may take their food to a central fire and [561]

844 [621] [847] effective. The only indication of band interest in birth is the prohibition against married women procuring abortions, which are known and sometimes practiced among the unmarried girls, though rarely.

[594] [561] [533] [554] As far as the nuclear family is concerned the event arouses considerable happiness, and the mother's female age mates may gather with her to sing a few *elima* songs to celebrate the blessing of motherhood; a childless woman is regarded as the most unfortunate of beings. A few of the younger youths may show some interest, as the new child will before long become their responsibility for protection and instruction. After a few days, when the child is brought freely into the open, the hunters and elders will fondle it and compliment the parents. The father is as proud as the mother, and just as likely to carry the child around to show it off.

[843] Medical precautions are minimal. The mother is likely to be off on the hunt, or on the trail somewhere when birth takes place; there is no lessening of activity for her during pregnancy. Childbirth is said to be effected easily, with complications only rarely happening. Any woman may act as midwife; the father should not be present. If there is delay the expectant mother may be massaged to help delivery, or she may be brought away from the camp into the forest, and sat close to a tree against which she pulls with a vine rope. Within two hours of delivery, if birth took place in the camp, the mother is apt to appear in the doorway of her hut, with a bundle wrapped in bark cloth held in her arms. Within the same period of time, if birth took place on the trail, she will continue her journey.

844 846 412 Although the father is not present at the birth in person, it must be one of his arrow blades, or formerly a wooden or leaf knife made by him, that will cut the umbilical cord. The blade is kept with the cord until the child is old enough to make a bundle of them both, take them to a stream and bury them where they will get carried away by the next flood waters.

846 844 There is also knowledge of a custom of couvade, though I did not find anyone who had practiced it. If the birth is slow, the father takes off all his clothes and his sister-in-law washes and rubs him. She then goes to the place of labor, and when the child is born returns to the father, who must make a token gift before he can clothe himself again.

846 751 The father, and the mother's brother, if he is in the camp, cut special vines daily and sprinkle their juices over both the baby and the mother, "to make them strong." Some of these vines contain so much

881 an injunction against eating meat, and this seems to be when the *elima* activities are affecting the hunt and the supply of game.

The rest of the *bamelima* are merely expected to be in attendance, and come and go as they please.

In the very lack of restrictions we can see that the Mbuti do not regard the *bamelima* to be in any ritual condition of danger or impurity. At such times as they are free to be among other band members in the camp they behave perfectly normally, playing with young children, fondling babies, sitting by family hearths, and so forth. But they eat separately and wash separately, so we might say that at least they are in a condition of ritual respect.

881 864 867 To begin with, the *bamelima* spend most of their time either inside the hut or else off with an instructress, in the forest. Inside the hut they are taught the songs of the *elima* by any older women who care to take part in the instruction. In the forest, I was told by a number of women, young and old, the girls are instructed in the arts of motherhood. This presumably includes such aspects of sexual life as are still unknown to them, which are probably few, but also use of the various herbs and treatments that a woman must know to insure fertility, an abundance of milk, easy childbirth, and abortion if necessary.

881 • 533 Girls say that certain of the *elima* songs are taught them in the forest rather than in the hut, and as the festival progresses less and less time is spent in the hut, and more in the forest. For the festival is said "to rejoice the forest," to make it happy and glad. If the girls are not singing well they are told the forest will be displeased. If they are dejected they are asked if they want the forest to be sad. Everyone is expected to be happy, and as the *bamelima* go through the forest they sing to it. As with so many of the other songs of the Mbuti, the *elima* songs are either wordless, being just plays on vowel sounds, or else the words are slight and without any evident significance, such as "Ibu is a dog," "Let's get leaves," and "Oh, the mud!" Other songs sung by the *bamelima* toward the end of the festival, when they sing in public in the camp, are rather different, making rather more sense and being distinctly spicy in nature.

But the songs that are considered as true *elima* songs and which conform to a musical style of their own, are evidently sacred. When they are sung in the forest, they are sung *to* the forest. A phrase is cast at the forest and an echo is awaited before the girls continue. Even an individual girl, usually the one with blood, will sing in this

881 533 • [177] way to the forest. If the *elima* happens to be in a village camp, as it sometimes is for part of its duration, the girls will still go away off into the forest to sing their songs. The older men and women say that the festival should be held entirely in the forest, but the younger Mbuti point out that it is an occasion for rejoicing and feasting, and so it is much better to be near a village and eat off the villagers. Even when doing that, however, one is likely to come across broken saplings stuck in the ground alongside a trail many hours from the village camp, showing that the *bamelima* passed by there, "rejoicing the forest." Sometimes they may be heard in their peculiar antiphony with the forest, at other times the saplings appear swiftly and silently a few yards from an Mbuti youth as a sign that the *bamelima* are nearby and should not be disturbed. Sometimes youths, thinking they have left the *bamelima* safely in their hut in a village camp, are hours off in the forest in their usual boisterous, noisy way, and will find themselves attacked and chased by the girls, armed with sticks and whips.

881 Usually the girls are all together, but every now and then one of the *elima* girls and her assistant will go off together into the forest, and stay there for half a day or more. At such times the others sit around looking dejected, and complain of being deserted. The older women then say that they should not complain, that it is good for the girl to go away sometimes and "converse with the forest."

881 778 [302] As at birth, there is a certain amount of decoration of the body with what might be considered as forest charms, and toward the end of the festival the girls paint each other with a white forest clay. The personification of the forest, and the frequency with which it is referred to, and the way in which this is done as though its personality were an ordinary matter of fact are another indication of the intense personal importance of the forest in the life of the Mbuti, of its character as a parent, a friend, and a lover, the provider of all things. But it cannot be interpreted as forest worship, for to the Mbuti it is simply a matter of fact.

881 561 571 866 182 One thing that is particularly interesting in consideration of the *bamelima* is that while it is very clearly an age group, it does two things. It does not deny individuality to the *elima* girl, who in fact is constantly displaying it and often causing friction as a result, but it effectively consolidates an age group that might otherwise have been rather lacking in cohesion. Girl's activities are, on the whole, less co-operative in nature than those of boys, and whereas boys are clearly formed into co-operative groups before arriving at puberty, this is not

have intercourse with her, he must then stay in the *elima* hut until the 881
end of the festival, and he will be considered as her betrothed. There 584
is no doubt that the girls are, like their mothers, anxious to find suitable lovers who may become their betrothed, and it would indeed only be a particularly flirtatious girl who did not hope that her *elima* would end in betrothal. During the first weeks the girls have ample [836]
opportunity for experimentation, and it may be assumed that such
experimentation began even before the festival began. But in the last [832]
two weeks they are looking for a future husband, and they take great pains to paint their bodies and make themselves beautiful for their evening appearances outside the *elima* hut.

These occasions are formal presentations of the girls as adults. For 881
the first time they sing the *elima* songs and dance before the entire 832
band, and for the first time the youths who are considered as suitable 533
candidates sit together and join in the singing with the girls. Each youth will try to catch the attention of the girl of his choice, and each girl will try to respond, but the occasion is a serious one, and the mothers, who sit with the girls and separate them from the youths, sharply reprove anyone who is caught flirting. When the singing is over, the girls are shepherded back into their hut, and unless they come out in an attack with their whips, no boy may enter.

The length of the festival is anything from one to two months, 881
and it ends without regard to the successful betrothal or otherwise 783
of the *elima* girls. The girls are taken to a nearby stream in the early 515
hours of one morning, and wash themselves carefully a number of times. I have heard them refer to this as "washing the blood," but this is also a village expression for the ritual purification of a menstruating woman, and it is impossible to be sure of the exact significance of the term for the Mbuti until more material is available. The washing, however, is unlike that of village ritual washing, being completely informal, the *elima* girls washing together with all the others, eating and drinking in between sessions of swimming and splashing and playing in the water. When it is over they return to the camp, rub their bodies with oil, sing and dance in public as much or as little as they like and without adult supervision. They continue to stay together throughout the day as a group, but in the evening they disperse to their individual homesteads. For the next few days this is repeated, without the washing, and then the camp returns to normal.

If a betrothal has been effected, the boy will wait for a suitable opportunity, 584
then make the proper approach to the girl's parents, asking

though he expected as much. Rather more serious is a medicine called, 224
in the Epulu district, *anjo*. It is a paste made from the heart, brain 789
and eyes, sometimes from other parts as well, of some highly prized 825
game. The paste is charred and placed inside the horn of that animal,
which is then inverted and stuck in the ground, usually near the family
hearth. The paste is put on the body, most often the forehead, of
the hunter and of members of his family. Sometimes it is even offered
to privileged friends. It is believed to convey to the hunter the
senses of the animal so that he will be able to deceive the animal as
well as foresee his movements. However, the use of this individual [577]
magic is considered antisocial in many bands, particularly if it appears
to be attended by success at the cost of others in the band. It [578]
may cause disputes, and then generally all such medicine is collected
and burned.

By far the most significant magico-religious acts connected with 224
the hunt are more of the order of religion than of magic. One is the 533 •
hunting song (with or without dance), and the other is the hunting 535
fire. The song or the dance may precede or follow a hunt. It is distinct 789
from any other form of song or dance. The song form is rather
complex and demands co-operation in a manner comparable to that
demanded in the hunt itself. The dance is suggestively imitative of a
successful hunt, but is by no means mere mime. Like the song form,
the choreography is quite distinct, and is not used in any other context.

The hunting fire in the southern part of the net-hunting area takes 224
the form of a fire lit near the trail just before the hunt sets out in the 372
morning. It is generally lit by youths, always at the base of a young 789
tree. When blazing it is covered with leaves, so the heavy smoke is
given off. Men and women, as they pass by the fire on their way to
the hunt, may stop to gossip, or they may pay no attention. I have [778]
not seen or heard of any accompanying ritual or invocation, the only
explanation ever stated being that the fire is to rejoice the forest, and
it would seem to have the same primary purpose as song and dance,
that of attracting the attention of the forest. It is certainly believed
that the fire will insure the protection of the Mbuti and help toward
success in the hunt.

Further north, another form of hunting fire is used, associated with [184]
rather more ritual. There the net-hunters build the fire within the
camp, whereas in the south it is always just outside. The fire is sur-

mushrooms, of which there are many edible varieties at any one time 222
throughout the year; the sweet *itaba* and similar roots, which are
found by following its telltale vine along the ground, then grubbing
with a stick for the roots at the end; nuts, of which there are again
many varieties at any time of year; and divers berries. There are also
succulent fruits and a few leafy vegetables, though the latter seem
rarely used except as herbs. However, they are likened by the Mbuti [252]
to the village manioc top, which is cooked as a spinach, and perhaps
it is because of the availability of manioc tops and their more pleasant
taste that the indigenous vegetable is falling into disuse.

Among the net-hunters, gathering takes place during the course of [224]
the net-hunt, on the way to and from the hunt, and between each
cast of the nets. Women carry baskets on their backs, with a bark [482]
tumpline over their foreheads, as do their young daughters. In the
same way that the boys form an age group during the hunt, so do the
girls. The boys split into two sections and guard each extremity of
their hunting semicircle; likewise the girls split into two groups and
beat at each end of the semicircle of beaters. Only the older boys and
girls are expected to act as adults, and even they need not necessarily
act with their parents. The girls go off on foraging parties on their
own, and women go off in twos and threes to do their gathering. There [602]
is no recognizable kinship pattern, at least among the Epulu band, to
these gathering associations. Women or girls who gather together are
likely to be friends of approximately the same age; that is about the
only generalization possible.

Men, not having baskets with them, are less able to gather effectively,
but if they pass a bank of mushrooms they will pick whatever
they can carry without encumbering themselves, and they will send
the younger boys back to camp with their arms full.

Gathering, then, is a much more individual affair than hunting
among the net-hunters. Even among the archers, where the women
are not required on the hunt, they only go off in twos or threes to
gather, and the same freedom is allowed for the men to gather whenever
they have the opportunity. The spoils are similarly regarded much [422]
more as individual property than as communal, though sharing does
take place.

There are no rituals and no magic associated with gathering, but 222
insofar as it is primarily a woman's occupation, *elima* songs are fre- 533
quently sung on gathering expeditions. As with hunting songs, the 789
[778]
elima songs are designed to attract the attention of the forest deity, [776]

222 533 189 [778] [776] and since the forest is benevolent the songs thus are thought to secure protection. In point of fact they do, for the throaty chorus of even two or three Mbuti women is enough to scare away any game. When not singing the women beat their hands together, shout or talk loudly to each other, for the same purpose. I know of only one woman injured while gathering. She was alone, which was the first mistake, and the first question asked when news came back to camp that she had been attacked by a buffalo was the apparently surprising one, "Was she not singing?" She was not, nor was she "talking to the forest," and that was her second mistake, the consequence of which was death. The Mbuti are practical enough to recognize the "noise" value of song, but they see more in it than that.

262 When the Mbuti are near a source of plantation foods and can acquire them by one means or another, then their daily diet is largely vegetable. The meal taken before going hunting and the snack on the hunt are both likely to be entirely vegetarian, meat being eaten only at the evening meal. Even then it may be served with one or another [222] vegetable. Even when the Mbuti are far away from a supply of village foods and living entirely on the forest they still rely heavily on vegetable foods, and gathering must be considered at least equally important with hunting as a subsistence activity. From what I was able to see, this is true among the archers as well as among the net-hunters. It is also true that throughout the forest the supply of forest vegetable foods, though varying, is constant and sufficient, frequently ample. If there is any time when there is a greater abundance than at other times, it is during the honey season.

HONEY

221
222 Falling approximately in the middle of our calendar year, and lasting a full two months, the honey season is of vital importance to the Mbuti not only from a nutritional point of view but structurally. [621] [578] We have already seen how at this time the net-hunting bands split up into minimal sections, separating hostile or factious elements and consolidating existing friendships, so that when the band re-forms it will have resolved most of the internal dissensions built up over the previous year, on the whole reaffirming old loyalties but always asserting some that are new. The archer band, normally segmented, joins together during the honey season in what is essentially the same process. It is significant that the honey season should be marked

It is significant that the honey season should be marked among the Mbuti by a special type of song, musically distinct from 221
the other types, and by a ritual dance involving ritual use of fire. I 222
have seen this dance throughout the forest, and heard the same dis- 533 •
tinctive honey song, the latter being made all the more distinct by the 535 [372]
use of special wooden clappers called *ngbengbe* by the net-hunters of [534]
the Epulu region, *epopo* or *koko* by the archers further east. [192]

Many different kinds of honey are recognized, and each has its own 222
distinctive taste. All that I tasted were exceptionally sweet except for [114]
the *apuma* honey, which is very liquid and highly fermented by the
time it is collected late in the season. Most honey is found high up in
boles in the upper branches of the tallest trees. This is always col- 221
lected by men and youths who can climb trees, unless the diameter is 481
too great, simply by exerting lateral pressure on the trunk with their arms while they move their feet up, pulling themselves close to the trunk with a jerk as they move their arms up. If a tree is too wide to climb this way, they may loop a vine around it, holding the ends with their hands, or they may climb a smaller tree nearby and jump across where the branches meet higher up. Hollow trunks or branches are used by bees as hives.

Other honey is found a few feet above ground level, again in a hol- 222
low tree trunk, and this is the only kind of honey, except for the rare [192]
sundu, which is found in the ground, that a woman may collect.

The actual collecting procedure is the same. If the entrance to the hive is small, it has to be widened with an ax. Then a leaf tube in which there are smoldering embers is introduced into the hole, and by blowing through the other end, the Mbuti fills the hive with smoke and drives out the bees. Most of the bees do not sting at all, and those that do sting do not seem to cause any great pain. Even before they have all left the hive the collector puts his arm in and pulls out handfuls of honey, eating it on the spot, sharing it with friends who may be helping him. When they have had their fill they throw down what
is left to those waiting below. If by themselves, they fill a special bark [415]
honey container or a basket lined with leaves, and bring the rest back
to camp. There it is shared by all, either being eaten in the comb or 262
warmed in leaf containers over the fire. If it is full of white maggots it is particularly prized, and will almost certainly be warmed to loosen the honey until the maggots wriggle, at which point it is consumed with relish.

If the honey is very dirty, full of rotten bark or leaf mold, it is 262
wrapped in a leaf container and immersed in water. When it is pulled 252

627 Closer to an indigenous system of punishment is the morning rampage of the youths' section of the *molimo* [765] society. Disguised behind leafy branches they charge through the camp with the *molimo* trumpet on their shoulders, and attack the huts of any truly recalcitrant offenders. Even then, as a token of the responsibility of the entire camp, the youths attack *every* hut to some extent, taking a token leaf from every hut. And still in keeping with the notion of dissipating the blame, they are likely to give the worst beating to the hut of the disputant who is least to blame.

681 There are two threats that form the ultimate sanctions against 684 the most serious offenses. One is the threat of ostracism, for such crimes as incest, and this is spoken of as leaving the matter to the forest. Ostracism means refusing membership in the band. If one band does this, other bands are likely to follow suit, and the offender 688 will be left alone in the forest, and alone he will die. The other threat 765 is the direct threat of death, but this is reserved among the Epulu 533 Mbuti and other net-hunting bands uniquely for the crime of failure on the part of an adult male to sing (a crime sometimes conversely described as sleeping) during the *molimo* festival. The sacred singing takes place late at night, and its efficacy depends on participation of all the men and youths. It is said that anyone found sleeping (the only conceivable reason for not singing) would be killed with two spears in the stomach and buried beneath the *molimo* hearth. The women would simply be told he had gone away, or been taken by a leopard, and he would never be referred to again.

627 578 The different ways of dealing with a dispute depend so much upon the context rather than upon the precise nature of the dispute that the legal process can best be illustrated by citing a number of cases. It will immediately be apparent that in the vast majority of instances there was no visible conclusion to the disputes at all; they evaporated as quickly as they arose. There were few instances where anything resembling a general opinion was expressed, and even fewer where any positive action was taken. The cases that follow, then, are classified according to the most common causes of dispute. Of such causes food and sex are by far the most common. Territorial disputes are confined to married couples with different territorial affiliations, but whereas food disputes are also largely found among the young (married) hunters, they are by no means always marital, but often between unrelated hunters or their wives, and occasionally among youths. Disputes concerning sex involve both the young married couples and youths, as do the everyday disputes over apparently

222
year. While Manyalibo's crime was serious enough, desecrating the 224
forest in the honey season by hunting for the villagers, Masisi's was 621 578
equally, if not more, serious, in his attitude to the trespassing bands. [688]
The night before Cephu joined him, Masisi was made the subject 222
of discussion, from the middle of his own camp, by several youths 621
and young hunters. They all asserted the right of their in-laws to 628
enter their own territory, to hunt or gather honey, whether they were 578
wanted or not. They agreed that permission should have been asked [626]
first, but that in light of the surplus of honey in the forest it was
hardly necessary. The discussion ended by everyone agreeing that all [186]
the noise[3] of the past weeks was plainly the fault of the villagers who
wanted the meat that caused the rift to begin with. This decision was 222
followed by a plea from Masisi for much singing to make the forest 533 ●
happy again. The honey songs were immediately taken up with renewed 626
vigor, and Masisi was prominent in maintaining them right to
the end of the honey season.

6. Largely through preoccupation with Cephu, Manyalibo and 626
Herafu, with the Effundi Somali band and now yet another trespassing 578
band from the neighboring Eboyo territory, Masisi's camp had 222
several days with little honey and little food of any kind. All men in 152
the group took turns in stating their complaints from midcamp, each 621
promising to find out who was responsible and threatening to name
them. On the fourth successive day of such "noise," the singing having
deteriorated, much to the disgust of the youths and the women,
Masisi was particularly irritable and began a long harangue about how
bad the whole thing was, including his present camp, and saying that
he could name those who were responsible for it all being bad, but
instead he was going to name those who must go out the next day
and collect lots of honey and make it well again. He then named all
the hunters. But he continued arguing and, getting more and more
irate, began to imply that those he had just named were in fact those
responsible. There were growing murmurs of protest, which only excited
Masisi further, and there would almost certainly have been a
fight had it not been for the intervention of the youths and the young [534]
women. Two of the women and one youth seized the *ngbengbe*, [533]

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[3] "Noise" is a direct translation of the word *akami* in the local dialect of KiBira, or [192]
kelelé in KiNgwana. It is used in ordinary parlance, but always with an unfavorable connotation. [778]
It is given special significance by adding the comment that noise is bad
(*sinana*). This is tantamount to a moral judgment, invoking the supernatural sanctions
of the forest, for noise is also said to kill the forest (*akami a mu ndura*), just as it is said
to kill the hunt (*akami a mu mukira*).

626 621 wooden clappers used only for the accompaniment of honey songs,
578 and started clapping them vigorously while singing. Masisi found the
222 competition too strong, shrugged his shoulders, chased the women
152 away and, taking a pair of *ngbengbe* himself, joined in the singing.

[533] [534] The next day the men and the older youths went honey gathering
[431] and brought back enough honey to send some as a gift to Cephu.

7. Laziness is highly criticized among the Mbuti, and is always re-
157 lated to hunger. It is one of the few qualities (noisy hunting is an-
461 other, "blindness" in the honey season a third) that is countered by
536 public assertion, in mime, dance and song, of the opposite value.
[261] One morning, shortly after dawn, there were murmurings of discon-
[789] tent because of the dampness of the forest, and suggestions that there was enough food in camp to allow for a day without hunting. One of the older hunter's wives stalked out into the center of the camp and began an elaborate wordless mime, showing that she was not going to be lazy and stay behind and play and dance "empty" games and dances. She was going to take her husband's spear and go off and hunt (she reenacted a successful hunt) and return with lots of food and share it all around and make her *roho* good and make the forest happy. Then when *she* sang and danced, it would not be empty.

It was a good show, and the whole camp looked on and laughed, then went hunting.

224 8. One morning, at the beginning of the honey season, a number
461 of hunters set out, as usual, at scattered intervals. Several seemed to
626 be staying behind, so I also remained. After about half an hour the
578 hunters returned, one by one throwing their nets on the ground in the center of the camp. When they were all back, a bachelor youth who had gone with them began a tirade against the hunters who had stayed behind. Hearing his voice, and wondering why he was taking such a prominent part in a hunting issue, women began sleepily coming out of their huts. It was evident that too many had decided to stay home, and the hunt had not had enough beaters. The youth, Pepei, not only criticized the women as lazy animals for not coming on the hunt but also criticized the rest of the hunters, pointing out they had been even too lazy to send their sons with their nets, and had left people like himself, an orphaned youth, to do the work of men.

The hunters had nothing to say, but the women responded vigorously that they were not going to carry nets and spears for the men, they had work of their own to do, and that if enough youths had

29. A girl returning from the village related how there was an
administrator there who took her photograph. Masisi demanded the 578
money, and the girl said she did not ask for any. Masisi's wife said the 648
girl was a fool, that she could have got fifty francs. In fact, she was a
thief because she deprived everyone of cigarettes. The girl was still 578
standing up where she arrived in camp, and Masisi's wife went up 152
and forced her to sit down, and thrust her private parts into the girl's
face as a gesture of contempt. The girl's parents said nothing.

30. A man burped loudly during the evening meal, and brought [264]
forth insults from all sides that would have developed into a fight had [534]
Moké not taken the *banja* sticks and started beating them, a sign [765]
for the *molimo* singing to begin. [533] •

31. A girl, decorated with leaves stuck in her bark cloth, was danc- [301]
ing vigorously and some of the leaves kept falling out. She blamed
the younger children and started beating them until they fled, crying.
Nobody interfered.

32. Amabosu, for no known reason, refused to allow his wife to [593]
move the fire from their hearth when changing camp. She went to [372]
her brother's hut and sat there sulking for nearly a whole day. Ama-
bosu, fed by his mother, paid no attention.

33. Occasionally, however, even the most trivial origins can lead 578
to a serious and lasting rift. Such a dispute, described more fully in 152
The Forest People (Chapter 6), involved two brothers, Aberi and 593
Masalito. It started when Masalito went to visit his brother on a rainy
day. Masalito was in the main camp, Aberi in Cephu's camp. Aberi
was asleep, and his wife insulted Masalito twice, first by refusing to
smoke the same pipe, second by offering him an old and dirty pipe-
stem to take back to the main camp with him. This led to a fight be- [626]
tween the two brothers which was temporarily healed by the force of
ridicule levelled against Aberi, and further subdued by the action
of the *molimo* in beating Masalito's hut as a sign of the displeasure
of the forest.

However, the bad feeling remained, if hidden, until Aberi's death.

DISPUTES CONCERNING THEFT 685

Theft, apart from the kind practiced by Pepei, was unknown except [177]*
in the village context. Sometimes when Pepei was caught he was [183]
thrashed; on the other hand, sometimes he was tolerantly laughed
at and allowed to go his way. There was once, however, a curious
case that was never settled.

Two youths then take out the vines and shake them
in all directions, liberally sprinkling anyone who happens to be stand- 222
ing by. Other youths are by now standing about, whistling on their 789
honey whistles, a form of *madi* called *singbe*. The kindling is then 561 824
stuck upright in the trenches, beside the *teka* vines, which have been 372
replaced. Children help with this. 412

A hunter then places a single ember, apparently drawn from any fire, in a *mongongo* leaf and, having filled the center square with *mongongo* leaf stems, he places the coal on top. More kindling is added, crisscrossed much like a house of cards, each piece carefully placed by youths and hunters together. Without fanning, the kindling catches and a dense cloud of smoke is given off. An elder then brings over a bundle of old leaves that have been used for collecting honey, and places them near the fire. He waits until the smoke begins to dwindle, then directs the operation of placing the honey axes in the hearth, waiting for the blades to get warm and then using them to split some *toangbe* wood. The *toangbe* tree and the *tembu* tree are both good honey trees, but the *tembu* tree has to grow "old and fat" before it is favored by the bees.

Elders then carefully arrange the old leaves, adding more as neces-
sary, in a large circle around the fire. Four *singbe* whistles are stuck [534]
in the ashes of the fire, pointing to the cardinals. While elders stand [533] •
and shout, women gather and loudly clap their hands, and both hunt-
ers and youths kneel on the circle of leaves, facing in to the hearth,
and begin pounding their fists rhythmically on the ground. The tempo
increases to a maximum and is broken off with a sudden shout. This
is repeated twice more, after which the hearth is abandoned and camp
life resumes as though nothing had happened.

The Mbuti themselves are unable to give any satisfactory expla- [782]
nation of the performance, and it seems to combine elements of [776]
genuine magic (for they talk of the smoke attracting the bees and
bringing honey to them) and of invocation of supernatural interven-
tion (the *keti* are said to hear the pounding on the ground and will
know that the Mbuti want honey). Whatever it may be thought to
achieve, however, *angbe* (also *angbelu*) undoubtedly reiterates the
division of the band into age groups, a division that is evident
throughout the net-hunting season but is not so necessarily a part of
activity during the honey season.

However regarded, Mbuti magic implies belief and is to that extent 789
religious, no matter how much it may also be thought to have direct 771
causal attributes, and the belief always supposes the benevolence of 121

778 535 This was not an isolated instance, though such dancing and singing
152 are generally confined to youths and younger married people. The
778 erotic aspect of the relationship between forest and Mbuti is also seen
833 in the very clear individual preferences for certain types of place in
which it is found good to the *roho* to have sexual intercourse, such as
by a stream, or in dark shade, or in a patch of sunlight or moonlight,
or during the hunt, but in the forest rather than in the hut.

771 The perennial certainty of economic sufficiency, the general lack
789 of crisis in their lives, all lead the Mbuti to the conviction that the
[761] forest, regarded as the source of *pepo* and of their whole existence,
[181] is benevolent, and that the natural course of life is good. The absence
of magic is not necessarily an indication of technological mastery; in
this instance it is simply an indication of the normal absence of
crisis. We indicated that such magic as existed was not without its
spiritual aspects, and might possibly be better classified as religion.
778 For instance the use of vine and wooden charms on an infant to convey
[789] the strength of the forest to the child is not thought to achieve
its end directly, by physical transference alone. Physical contact with
these materials is considered strengthening, and certainly the juice
of the vine in which infants are bathed is thought to have strengthening
properties, but these things are also considered "pleasing to the
forest" (*babongisa ndura*). This phrase constantly recurs, and shows
the belief in the awareness by the forest of its "children" and their
needs. Such acts and many others, by physically relating the individual
to the forest, are believed to create an added awareness of the Mbuti
by the forest. It is not only the strength of the forest that is wanted,
but its affection.

778 THE POWER OF SOUND

822 Birth is attended with an undemonstrative concern to establish
533 this relationship between the forest and the individual, and it is reinforced
[844] at puberty by what might also be considered in some respects
[881] as magic, but which is more essentially religious, and that is song.
The mere attachment of a vine to the wrist or around the waist
requires that amount of effort and no more. Song requires continued
effort, is more direct and personal, and consequently more powerful—
its goal is identical. Song above all else is believed to attract the attention
of the forest, and to please it. "Sound is very strong indeed;
noise is bad, but song is good" (*S'uti mota ningo'e, akami sinana'e;*

imba nde bonga'i). The positive emphasis on *ekimi*,[4] or quiet, is in 778
no way thought of as being in conflict with song, for *ekimi* is cool, 822
and so is song, and both are pleasing to the forest. Song is in no way 533 ●
associated with noise, though both are recognized to be sound.

There is no such thing as secular song among the Mbuti. Songs 533
sung by the Mbuti in the village, apart from being quite different in [822]
musical form from those sung in the forest, are spoken of as "empty
sound" (*s'uti bobo*) or even as "noise." There are distinct musical
forms for distinct occasions of importance in forest life such as hunting,
honey gathering, puberty and death. The absence of any specific
Mbuti form for village events, including *nkumbi* initiation or village-arranged
marriages, is an indication of the lack of importance of these
events in the forest life of the Mbuti.

There are, apart from the four major types of song listed above, two other types that are less formalized, but which are considered more in the nature of "sound" than "song." One is the lullaby, which is an individual creation (unlike any other forms of song, all of which require group participation), and the other is the play song, accompanying hoop-jumping, skipping or divers other rhythmic games.

Of the four major types, two concern economic activities and are
sung on the appropriate occasion, each involving men and women.
The other two are more directly religious in nature, being concerned 533
with puberty and death, though the field of each is somewhat wider 881
than these precise moments in the life cycle. The puberty songs
(which have nothing to do with the *nkumbi*, not being sung on that
occasion and in no way resembling the village songs that *are* sung at
that time) concern primarily the women and youths (male and female),
and are first learned and sung at puberty but may be sung at
other times similarly critical to growth, birth and marriage. (Normally [844]
elima songs, or puberty songs, are sung at birth only if there is some [585]
special concern over the child's welfare, and at marriage only if it is
desired to consecrate an otherwise "empty" marriage taking place in
the village. Then not only is an *elima* song sung but leaves are brought
in from the forest, and the bridal couple are completely surrounded
by them to indicate that they are, in fact, joining together in the
forest.)

Death songs are normally sung at the death of an adult, male or 000

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[4] *Ekimi* is the word most frequently used in this band for quiet. Like many other words it is a dialectal form, in this case of the Ngwana word *kimia*. In KiBira the equivalent would be *kobia*. [192]

• 533 **Death songs are normally sung at the death of an adult, male or** female, during the ensuing festival (*molimo*), but some of them may
765 be sung at other times of crisis that threaten life, notably sickness or poor hunting. Certain songs seem to be reserved for actual death, but my impression is that this is a matter of personal attitude, for there are other ways in which a distinction is more clearly made between what are called the lesser and the greater *molimo*, the latter being the festival concerned solely with death.

533 To the same extent that the *elima* songs are of rather more impor-
462 tance to women than men, so are *molimo* songs considered more the
881 concern of men. There is, however, no absolute exclusion. On the
765 contrary, the male youths are an integral part of the *elima* festival, which celebrates their puberty just as much as it celebrates that of the girls, and although the actual festival is occasioned by the physical maturation of the girls, who are then taught the *elima* songs, the male youths are needed to sing the chorus to certain of those songs. In the *molimo*, at one point, the roles of the sexes are reversed (as in *ekokomea*), with the women taking over the men's songs, the men sitting back and listening, like women.

533 An examination of Mbuti song form not only reveals areas of con-
182 cern to the Mbuti, such as their food-getting activities, life and death,
181 but it also reveals the concern of the Mbuti for cooperative activity. Each type of song requires a group of people to sing it, and if there is a solo it is sung over a chorus, and the solo is passed around from one individual to another. This is similar to the Mbuti rejection of individual authority and their concern for dispersing leadership as widely as possible. There are certain parts of certain songs that are
[561] sung by youths, hunters or elders, strictly according to age, and song form thus also reinforces Mbuti concern for the age differential as an important element of their social structure. The songs are most frequently in round, or canon, form, and the hunting songs, in order to heighten the need for the closest possible cooperation (the same need that is demanded by the hunt itself), are sometimes sung in *hoquet*.[5]

533 There are certain similarities between the hunting songs and the *molimo* songs, but this is an area that requires a great deal more care-

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[5] This is a technique in which each note of the melodic line is taken by a single individual who sings that note alone, at the correct moment. The melodic line is thus literally divided among the participants (sometimes singing in groups of two or three), and the melody can only be reconstituted and heard by the cooperation of all. The complications are heightened by the use of canon, and by the use of a harmonic pattern which is also sung in *hoquet*, and proceeds clockwise as the melodic line proceeds, as always, counterclockwise.

ful analysis by competent musicologists.[6] As described, the above 533 divisions represent divisions recognized by the Mbuti, and visible in differences of musical form. There is sometimes an additional cate- 533 gory stated, that of the elephant-hunting song, which seems to overlap 224 both the ordinary hunting song (specifically referred to by the Epulu Mbuti as a net-hunting song) and the *molimo* song. In view of the 825 possible elephant symbolism in the *molimo* festival, this could be of 765 importance, though not enough is known at the moment of the elephant-hunting song to properly assess its position in the system. In this respect it should also be remembered that the Ngwana term *esumba*, or *lusumba*, frequently used by the Mbuti in the forest context as synonymous with their *molimo*, was originally for the Ngwana in the nature of elephant-hunting magic.

All songs share the same essential nature, sharing the same power 533 of sound. The sound "awakens" the forest, in Mbuti terminology, 822 and the nature of the song indicates the particular area of interest of 778 the Mbuti at that moment, thus attracting the forest's attention to the immediate needs of its children. It is also of the essential nature of all songs that they should be "pleasing to the forest."[7]

Rather more magical in nature, perhaps, is the way the Mbuti use 822 other forms of sound than song. A sudden noise of any kind is con- 201 sidered "strong," and generally bad; an isolated hand or arm clap, or a single loud shout, will bring complete silence to a camp or to a hunt. 198 Whistling is considered very "strong" indeed, but here the word 192

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[6] It is interesting to note here the elephant-hunting significance of the Ngwana *esumba* ritual, and the linguistic confusion between *esumba* and *molimo*. Frequently, 765 I have seen in the forest the remains of what seems like the model of a spear-fall, and have always been told that a *molimo* had been held there. Most often such sites were in old, deserted camps, once or twice (particularly in archer territory) on the trail.

[7] Pahlen (1949) gives an excellent general background to the primitive concept and use of music, though his acceptance of the sounds of nature as symbols of supernatural powers is not demonstrated. He points out (p. 18) how in ancient cultures music went hand in hand with religion, "the synthesis of wisdom, beauty, kindness and solace." He is referring primarily to countries with "highly developed cultures," but much of what he says is applicable to primitive society. It is certain that an acute analysis of Mbuti music would reveal much that parallels the structure of Mbuti society. The extraordinary level of polyphonic achievement is surely related to a highly developed individualism that would hardly tolerate the confines of unison. The Mbuti musical categories of *berai* and *imiai*, chorus and solo song, indicate a system of recognized relationships between the group and the individual, and the technique of *hoquet*, already mentioned, further mirrors social relationships. Such considerations, however, should not obscure Pahlen's major point that music also mirrors social values. It is an analytical tool, requiring little musical training, that has been much neglected by anthropologists, and it is hoped that a systematic analysis of Mbuti music now being undertaken at Columbia University will provide data from which not only may further light be shed on Mbuti society, but from which may emerge the beginnings of an ethno-musicological methodology.

822 "strong" has the same double meaning that it has when used to describe
[198] song. In using either the Ngwana term (*nguvu*) or the Bira
[192] term (*mota*), the Mbuti may imply difficulty as well as sheer physical
strength. A sudden noise that is *mota* has an inherent power of its
own. A song or whistle has power only if it is properly performed.
822 The proper performance is not so much the following of a prescribed
198 pattern, though there may be and usually is such a pattern, if general,
[778] but rather the transference of *pepo* so that by contact with *pepo* the
[761] song or the whistle becomes *mota*. Singing or whistling not so
[533] touched with *pepo* is "empty noise," and doubly bad. Whistling is
widely used to arrest action of any kind. In everyday life, whistling
brings the movement of all hunters and beaters to an immediate stillness
and stops all sound among them. The sign for them to continue
is an imitated animal cry. In the camp, if someone thinks he hears a
foreign sound—of approaching people or game, of a "crying" tree (a
tree starts creaking some days before it falls, and this is referred to
as "crying")—he whistles to call for silence so that all may listen and
[533] hear. During the *molimo* songs, particularly, but during any song, also,
[765] whistling softly brings the song to an end. A sudden storm is likely
[821] to bring shrill whistles, though nobody claims to even hope for them
[789] to stop the storm, though they all say it is worth trying. They explain
that whistling is effective in other realms because it is the affair
of the Mbuti, but it will not stop a storm because that is the
affair of the forest.[8]

534 All such whistling is done with the lips. Whistles are also made of
824 seeds and carved from wood, however, and though the seed-whistles
[198] are purely for children to play with, the wooden whistles (*piki, segbe*)
[192] have special usages. Rarely, a small whistle may be attached to a net,
and although functional it is never blown. Similar whistles are used
by those net-hunters who build a hunting fire in the camp, and are
placed within the vine circle surrounding the fire, again not blown.
Larger whistles made of two semicylindrical sections of wood and
bound together by vine or *nkusa* twine, tapering to a point at one
end (left open so it can be stopped with a finger) and notched for
blowing at the other end, are sometimes attached to a fur cap worn
by hunters, and may be blown before the hunt, possibly during a hunting
[222] dance. Similar whistles made of *angbe* wood, from the *angbe*
[825] tree that provides most of the honey, are used during the honey season

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[8] Cooper (1941, 24 seq.), in drawing comparisons between the Semang, Andamanese, and Eta, finds much similar interest in noise.

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"to call the bees" (in the sense of attracting their attention, not of 824
summoning them). The belief is that these whistles will halt the 222
game or the bees, so that they may be found more easily. 825

All such whistling, whether by lip or by *piki*, is done by men. 198
Women rarely whistle, though they may do so to the same end as the 822
men. If they do, it is considered all the more *mota*. 462

It could easily be explained by the Mbuti that the sound itself paralyzes the animals or the bees, and has this direct effect (and could so be more properly called magical), but they deny this strongly and say that the forest hears the *piki* and leads them to the bees or the game (or alternatively that the forest holds the bees and the game still for its children to find them).

In ordinary conversation, sounds are widely used to convey dif- 201
ferent ideas, a snap of the fingers indicating that the action being 19
described was done suddenly, a high-pitched, drawn-out exhalation indicating it was done slowly. Wherever possible, the narrative is illustrated by imitations of the sound of the action described. Vowel sounds, unformed into words, are used in conversation similarly to heighten ideas, convey added emotion, to supply an element that would otherwise be missing and which is plainly of great importance
to the Mbuti. For the forest is nearly always full of sound, and the 182
Mbuti refer to this constant background by saying "the forest is talk- 778
ing" (*ndura a lufu*). The Mbuti listen, and interpret, and make use 822
of what they hear. If the forest stops "talking," then it is a sign that something is very wrong and alerts the Mbuti to imminent danger.

It is not surprising, then, that sound so carefully controlled as song 533 •
should be considered as *mota nengo, mota ngbekbekbei*, the "stron- 822
gest" possible kind of sound, activated by the breath that is so mys- 778
teriously connected with *pepo*. Song is used to communicate with the 19
forest, and it is significant that the emphasis is on the actual sound, [761]
not on the words. Frequently the mere vowel sounds are used, sometimes imitative of animals, birds or bees but more often simply to suit the melodic line of the song. When words are used they are most often trivial, and may be spontaneous and highly sketchy references
to one or another event of the day. That the song is directed at the 533
forest, and intended to awaken the forest, is most clearly seen in the 778
molimo festivals, which are the Mbuti reaction to crisis. The *molimo* 765
is named for the festival, for the society that performs the festival, [829]
and for the central and solitary piece of paraphernalia, the trumpet [534]
that echoes the song of the Mbuti on into the depths of the forest.

THE LESSER *MOLIMO* (*molimo madé*)

224 Apart from death there are two major crisis areas over which the Mbuti may have little or no effective control, poor hunting and sickness. But they do have a certain amount of control, and it is frequently effective. Poor hunting is more often than not remedied simply by hunting elsewhere, and it is rare that a band goes hungry
752 for any reason except laziness. Against sickness the Mbuti have many
757 remedies that are plainly effective. In particular they know how to clean open wounds and prevent infection, they know how to set and mend broken limbs, they know how to reduce fevers, and they know how to alleviate minor ailments such as headache, toothache and mild stomach disorders. They also have effective remedies against snakebite. So in case of sickness they either cure the patient, or else the patient becomes well of his own accord, or else he dies, the latter event leading to the greater *molimo*.

778 In such crises, then, time alone usually provides a solution, and the
[224] Mbuti are accustomed to waiting for these situations to improve. If
[75] bad hunting persists, however, or sickness shows no sign of alleviation, then it becomes a matter "of the forest." There is no rite or
778 ceremony, but in the evenings the men gather around a central fire
796 and sing *molimo* songs, thereby attracting the attention of the forest
533 to their plight. The songs do not convey any specific request from the
[782] Mbuti for the betterment of their condition, it being considered necessary only to awaken the forest, for then it is for the forest to act as it will. Being benevolent, like a parent, whatever it does is accepted as being good, though it may not be understood.

796 Normally a lesser *molimo* lasts for only a few days, for during that time there is likely to be a change in the situation that is taken as an indication that the forest has awakened. The evening songs are not
[533] accompanied by any of the preliminaries that mark the greater *molimo*,
[535] nor are the women and children quite so rigorously excluded, and
[765] there is not the same order of dancing, which in the greater *molimo* is of the utmost importance. In the lesser *molimo* the dancing will be done by youths only, and be casual and mildly erotic. Above all there will be no use made of the *molimo* trumpet.

All adults youths and men are expected to take part, and although
[626] there will be criticism if someone does not attend, there will not be the same violent reaction that there is against such offenders in the greater molimo.

greater *molimo*. In the case of a hunting *molimo*, the initiative is 796
taken by the younger hunters, who sit together around a fire and simply [533] •
begin singing. In the case of sickness, the initiative is taken by the adult men of the family concerned if the sick person is a child, and if the sick person is an adult the *molimo* will be initiated by his or her male age mates.

The hunting inevitably gets better sooner or later, and the lesser [224]
molimo, once begun, will continue until it does. But sickness may [776]
develop into death, in which case there will be an immediate change of camp, following an uncomplicated and informal burial, and the commencement of the greater *molimo*.

THE GREATER *MOLIMO* (*molimo mangbo*) 765

In a previous account (Turnbull, 1960, pp. 307–340), the general procedure of the greater *molimo* was outlined, and it was indicated that there is no set rule as to when a greater *molimo* should be held. Certainly it is not held for every death within the band, not even for every adult death. It may, on the other hand, be held for a child. It is [828]
largely a question of *roho*, and this is determined by a number of considerations such as the nature of the death, the importance of the deceased to the band, and the general tenor of life in the band at that moment, particularly the condition of hunting. A combination of [778]
poor hunting and ill humor and general sickness, associated with the death of a child, even of a stranger child temporarily within the band, may well occasion a *molimo*, for the total combination indicates that the forest is "sleeping" (*é langé toro*). On the other hand, the death of a great hunter, through his own fault or through sickness but at a time of good hunting and general contentment, may pass unmarked except by the usual summary burial and change of camp, all expression of grief being confined to the immediate family concerned.

One other consideration not without importance is the fact that whoever initiates a *molimo* festival undertakes a responsibility that may become a burden. He has to see that everyone cooperates in providing [261]
food, and when, as sometimes happens, the response is meager, he has somehow to provide enough himself for the society's evening repast. As a greater *molimo* is not likely to last under a month, except possibly for a child under circumstances which otherwise become quickly improved, the economic burden is one to cause careful consideration.

765 given fire to eat, just as water is passed through it to "cool" it. It is 372 rubbed with ashes and earth. It is brought into direct contact with 534 every individual by being passed over their heads as they sit around the fire singing, and each individual will at some time or another, at his own whim, scoop up ashes and rub the trumpet with them. And in [535] the evening appearances of the trumpet at the *molimo* hearth, while [831] the singer holds one end to his mouth and sings, the youth holding the far end pumps it up and down as he dances in imitation of the sexual act, sometimes holding the mouth of the trumpet close to his genitals, imitating the part of either man or woman. Little doubt is left about the symbolic connection between fire and life.*

765 561 • 533 There is an important distinction between the evening and the morning appearances of the *molimo* trumpet, and between the roles played by different age groups. In the evening the singing is primarily in control of the *mangesé*, or elders. Frequently, they have their own fire, the hunters have theirs, and the *kiyana*, or male youths, have theirs. Everyone joins in the singing, the elders maintaining over-all control and the hunters being the most prominent singers, except for the *molimo*-trumpet singer, who may be a youth or a young hunter, being chosen because of his ability as a singer rather than for any [535] other reason. It is the youths that do most of the dancing at their fire or at the central *molimo* fire (from which theirs is made by taking burning embers and setting them separately). The whole intent of the evening is to rejoice the forest, and this is done by singing throughout the night, and by eating a feast specially prepared from food contributed to the *molimo* hearth. (Just as with food, so with firewood and with fire itself—every single household in the camp is expected to contribute.) In the early days of the festival the old lady does not ap- [535] pear, and there is no attempt to stamp out the fire, though erotic [831] dances are constantly being danced around and over it. It is only toward the end of the festival that the nightlong songfest is dramatized by the appearance of the old lady, her dancing through the fire in an attempt to destroy it, and her tying up of the men (referred to 765 as both tying up the hunt and tying up the *molimo*). The evening meetings of the *molimo*, though full of the joy the Mbuti wish to convey to the forest, are nonetheless solemn in that the purpose is

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[831] * Fire is primarily connected with women; the hearth is often referred to as the vagina; the association of blood and fire is considered particularly dangerous. Thus the association of the male *molimo* trumpet with the fire and the ashes gives the trumpet phallic significance in this context. Elsewhere, this precise symbolism seems unimportant, the important factor being simply the trumpet's masculinity.

never lost sight of. The trumpet itself, while avowedly an "animal" 765 whose animal noises (mainly in imitation of elephant and leopard) 534 are designed to scare women and children and keep them in their huts, is the only sign of the presence of a supernatural power. The main function of the trumpet is to sing, and to pass on the song of the Mbuti into the forest. It is taken off to a distance from where it picks up the song from the men around the *molimo* hearth and echoes it on into the night. This way, the Mbuti say, the forest is sure to hear it and be pleased.

Normally a trumpet is kept high up, concealed in a tree. During a festival, however, it is kept in water except when in use, for it is considered to represent the power of the forest for chastisement. Keeping it in water keeps it "cool." It acts, it seems, as an intermediary, passing on the song of the Mbuti to the forest, but returning in the morning with power, and sometimes with anger. When it appears in the [533] morning, just before dawn, the men have had at the most an hour's sleep, and this is a signal for them to begin singing again. An adult male who fails to sing during a greater *molimo* festival is allegedly killed, and when the trumpet appears in the morning its first act is to search for sleeping men. It is held by a number of youths, who run up and down the camp in search (this may also happen during the evening). But then, to show its power, the trumpet is carried from hut to hut, the youths beating on each with branches and tearing leaves off the roofs. The huts of any troublemakers are particularly singled out, though with due regard for the process described under "Government," by which individual blame is avoided. The older men and even the women may yell at the *molimo* to go away, or to go back to the water, but on this occasion the youths are effectively in charge. There is generally a mock battle in which some of the youths will try to block the path of the trumpet, borne by other youths, or to deflect it in another direction. There may even be a tug-of-war, with some youths pulling it in one direction, some in another, though such contests are formal and enacted more as a dance than as an actual test of strength. All the time, those carrying the trumpet keep it concealed behind leafy branches, or simply by holding it between them. In the end it is carried out of the camp triumphantly as dawn breaks, and with a few defiant bellows returns to its secret hiding place in the water. A vine stretched across the stream warns women [784] and children to keep away.

It is noteworthy, however, that the trumpet is not considered as

sanctions, does not hold good for Mbuti society, where the three 577
principles are inextricably fused. One might be able to talk of law, 778
even if law implies sanction by force, for the Mbuti believe that the 626
forest has such power and force and will use it. Indeed, in their experi- 121
ence it does, for transgression is met with the force of *akami*, which [114]
kills. This is thought of as a very direct and practical response on the
part of the forest as the law. On the other hand, public opinion can
hardly be said to exist, for there is no public spokesman, and every
opinion on behavior is expressed in terms of pleasing or displeasing
the forest. Such public action as may be taken—ridicule or ostracism
—is taken in the name of the forest. Exile is literally being sent to the
forest to meet it directly. Religious sanctions are not differentiated
from any others; the threat is the same—noise and displeasure.

Ultimately, then, in our consideration of territory, despite the ob- 621
vious practical values involved and a certain extent of ecological 778
determination of behavior patterns, the territory as a principle of or- 181
ganization must be regarded as a religious principle. Indeed, life itself,
for the Mbuti, can almost be regarded as a ritual designed to please
the forest and secure *ekimi*. There is, as noted, an almost total ab- 778
sence of magic, and the only ritual that can be truly considered as 533
such, and is not otherwise a necessary daily activity, is song. We have [189]
seen that song is designed specifically to rejoice the forest, and to
draw its attention to its children, but beyond this and its reinforce-
ment, through musical technique, of the values of age and coopera-
tion, there is nothing particularly remarkable about it as a social
institution.

It is only when we come to death that there is a marked departure 765
from the normal tenor of life, and a ritual, the *molimo*, that might be 181
regarded as a ritual in the Durkheimean sense of recreating society 121
and reaffirming the social sentiment. While any interpretation of re- 182
ligious ritual of this kind is highly questionable, the attempt has to
be made.

Leaving aside the "legal" aspect of the *molimo* when it appears in
the early hours of the morning to wreak havoc in the camp, there are
few rituals that could be more explicitly concerned with the "recrea-
tion of society" in the most literal sense. Death is the most final and 761
inescapable of all crises, and for it there is no remedy. But it threatens 182
more than the life of the individual; it threatens the continuity of the
band, and so threatens the ritual of life by which the forest is pleased.
Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted

the camp or on the hunt, and they also sometimes shout at a storm 822
or at rain to drive away bad weather.

But more important than Mbuti recognition of the practical power 822
of noise is their recognition of its social value. When they say it is 577
the duty of the hunter age level to make noise, they mean just that,
even though it is precisely noise that will negate the hunter's other
duty, to hunt. The Mbuti do not connect the two duties—the one
refers to the hunt, the other to camp life. It is in the camp that the
hunter is expected to make noise; that is, to be disputatious. For the
countervalue, *ekimi*, is only "quiet" and does not refer to silence
(*kobinengo*), which is considered as an indication of great and imminent
danger. A silent camp is considered a bad camp and the badness
is destroyed by destroying the silence, which can be done in two
ways. One is by singing, which is recognized as sound but only described
as noise when it takes place in the village. Singing, as we have [533]
seen, is essentially a form of communication, even of communion, [778]
with the benevolent forest divinity. It destroys silence and "rejoices [182]
the forest" at the same time. But this is recognized as having only
temporary efficacy. To strike at the roots of silence, one employs
"noise" in the sense of argument, which is certainly its most common
connotation.

Silence in a camp betokens unusual ill humor, which is common 822
among the Mbuti when in their village camp, but not in the forest 577
(except when the hunt is spoiled by rain). Disputes seldom remain 578
hidden for long because of the intimate nature of camp life, but any 152
length of time is too long, and when a camp is silent it is invariably 626
the hunters who find some cause for "making noise." It matters little
what they pick on, but it is preferably not the underlying dispute
causing the silence. It may be directed at the cause if personal feelings
run high, but then the hunters are criticized for making too much
noise, *akami ndasi*. Youths and elders will alike shout at the hunters
and tell them this, but the noise will not die down until the disputants
have either come into the open with their dispute, putting it
before the band, or have been forced to join together in some common
but unrelated cause.

Thus there was an occasion on which Amabosu, for no evident 593
reason, took to beating his wife, Amaloku, with unwonted vigor and 578
regularity. A certain amount of wife-beating is considered good, and
the wife is expected to fight back. But Amaloku was aware of the
real reason for her husband's behavior, which was her own brother's

577 deavor of this kind, however, is recognized as being fraught with dif-
183 ficulty, and there is another way that is both easier and more sure,
828 for *ekimi mota* is produced by song. The process of "rejoicing the
• [533] forest" is a process of creating *ekimi mota* where it does not exist,
[778] of intensifying mere *ekimi* through song.

577 The term for "rejoicing the forest" in the Epulu area is *bongisa*
183 *ndura*. In KiNgwana the verb is either *furahisa* or *ponisa*, there being
828 no precise equivalent to *bongisa*. *Furahisa* is closer to the English
192 concept of joy, involving festivity; *ponisa*, however, means to cure.
The KiNgwana words are both used by the Mbuti in this context, interchangeably, and the meaning of *bongisa* lies between them, derived as it is from *bonga*, meaning good, in an all-inclusive sense.

577 Perhaps the exact connotation of "rejoicing the forest" is best de-
183 scribed by the process itself, which brings joy through joy. Singing
828 gives the Mbuti intense satisfaction. They say it makes them feel
533 good, in the sense of feeling joyful. The mood of song is joyful, even
778 when it is a *molimo* song on the occasion of death. By creating a
152 mood of joy within themselves the Mbuti convey that joy to the for-
est, which returns it, restoring *ekimi* or even *ekimi mota* to the camp. To describe song as mere "curing" would not quite cover the essential sharing process implied by the term *bongisa ndura*. Song is known, to the Mbuti, to have the infallible power of filling the forest with *ekimi mota*. It is sometimes described as being like the act of copulation in the moonlight, or wherever the individual talking feels that act to be the most intense and beautiful. The Mbuti say "*su bongisa ndura, ndura pisu ekimi*"—"we rejoice the forest, the forest gives us quiet." The distinction is simple, for joy is *ekimi mota*, an intensification of *ekimi*, and as such is not the norm and can only be temporary. Far more important to the Mbuti is that they should have, on a less temporary if less exalted level, the norm of *ekimi*.

533 While the forest cannot fail to be rejoiced by song, it may well,
778 for one reason or another, be displeased, as a father may be displeased
with his children (a perfectly common Mbuti metaphor), and withhold *ekimi* for a long time. The fact that singing brings joy to the Mbuti, filling them with *ekimi mota*, does not mean that it is not also hard work. For the forest is not content with one song. If singing is undertaken at all, and particularly if it is undertaken for purposes of restoring lost *ekimi* (i.e., if it is to be a *molimo* festival), it
[224] must be long and continuous. After a fest of singing every night, from
shortly after dusk to an hour before sunrise, the Mbuti set off to hunt

with excessive vigor. It would be an insult as well as *mbafu* (stupidity) to take all the trouble to rejoice the forest by song and then displease it by not having a particularly vigorous hunt. A month of this leaves the stoutest Mbuti more than a little tired, so although the remedy for *akami* lies in their hands, through song, at all times, it can be arduous and, since it is *mota*, it can be dangerous. Thus the supernatural sanction on social behavior is in no way lessened: the Mbuti all state that the forest, in its manifestation through the morning *molimo*, may punish and kill.

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The system as described can be seen easily enough to maintain internal order, and it can also be seen well enough how it operates, as an essentially forest-centered system based on age and forest values, to maintain separation from a village system based on kinship and anti-forest values—for one of the cardinal village beliefs is not simply that the village is better than the forest, but that the forest is the source of all evil. But now we have to see how these same elements that make for social order in the forest (the nonlineal band, age, territory, noise and song) operate within the village framework.

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Winter (1956) describes the relationship between the eastern extension of the Mbuti, the few who live among the Amba on the Uganda/Congo border, and the Amba themselves. Each group denigrates the other's mode of existence, yet they evidently live in the closest association with each other, in what Winter calls symbiosis. More important, he describes how two Mbuti groups are fitted into the Amba lineage structure, but only partially so. They are both attached to Bulibuli lineages, each to a maximal lineage as a whole; yet they do not share full and equivalent relationships as Bulibuli with the other lineages of the same clan. Winter mentions that they stand in a joking relationship with only one of the maximal lineages.

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Joking relationships are generally thought of as pertaining between individuals who stand in a specific relationship to each other, involving both proximity and distance. The proximity is thought of in terms of kinship, the distance is due to a difference, if not a conflict, of interests. The relationship can involve considerable amity and mutual cooperation, but nonetheless contain elements of hostility, particularly in its outer expression (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952, p. 91). The exact formularization varies from situation to situation, tolerating or compelling joking behavior, on a symmetrical or asymmetrical basis.

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The essential elements of this form of relationship are all present

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*177 the camp is filled with *akami*—not in search of *ekimi*, but in the hopes
578 of doing as the hunters do, killing noise with more noise.
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*177 5. SONG brings us to the crux of the opposition between Mbuti and
• 533 villagers, for all song in villages is by definition "empty," even if sung
181 by Mbuti, and even if, as is rarely the case, the song is strictly Mbuti in origin. That is, while in the village the Mbuti no longer have the ultimate safeguard of being able to "rejoice the forest" through song. Even if they tried, it would be *bulé*. Song being directly associated with *ekimi*, it follows, and the Mbuti affirm, that there can be no *ekimi*, or "quiet," in the village. *Ekimi*, as stated, is the ultimate goal
*177 of the Mbuti, and it is only *ekimi* that can please the forest. Visiting
181 the village, then, would be a treacherous act beyond reconciliation
[224] under Mbuti values if it were not for the Mbuti attitude to such
[778] visits as being a form of hunt, for hunting is pleasing to the forest, and hunting is also associated with noise and danger, *akami* and *mota*. The rationalization may seem a feeble one, but to the Mbuti it is adequate and convenient.

*177 Thus while the more formal institutions of the band, age levels and
181 territorial affiliation, work internally to achieve stability and externally
182 to directly counteract village attempts to subordinate the Mbuti, so
439 do forest values directly counter village values, maintaining the complete separation of the two peoples. The economic exchange that takes place, while undeniably mutually convenient, may also be in part a mere recognition of territorial propinquity and of mutual opposition, a mechanism for avoiding open hostility, which would otherwise be the only possible relationship.

*177 The strongly forest-oriented value system of the Mbuti, while oper-
181 ating toward the maintenance of internal order, completely counters
186 the attempts of the villagers to assert their dominance by supernatural sanctions based on village values. But the answer to the question
[224] as to why the Mbuti go to the extreme of allowing themselves to be
[881] circumcised and initiated by the villagers may be more than that offered by the Mbuti hunting metaphor.

*177 The metaphor recalls the technique of a hunter in taking on the
181 appearance (and smell) of his quarry, of rubbing himself with a paste
186 made of the heart and brains and eyes of the animal so that he can
224 feel and think and see like his quarry. It is not a technique widely practiced, though it *is* practiced by elephant hunters, and by some archers, and by elders who are out hunting on their own. It is more

THE WORLD OF THE FOREST

There are a multitude of sounds, but most of them are as joyful P 136
as the brightly colored birds that chase one another through the trees, 182
singing as they go, or the chatter of the handsome black-and-white 825
Colobus monkeys as they leap from branch to branch, watching with
curiosity everything that goes on down below. And the most joyful P
sound of all, to me, is the sound of the voices of the forest people 182
as they sing a lusty chorus of praise to this wonderful world of theirs 533•
—a world that gives them everything they want. This cascade of sound echoes among the giant trees until it seems to come at you from all sides in sheer beauty and truth and goodness, full of the joy of living. But if you are an outsider from the non-forest world, I suppose this glorious song would just be another noise to grate on your nerves.

The world of the forest is a closed, possessive world, hostile to all C
those who do not understand it. At first sight you might think it 182
hostile to all human beings, because in every village you find the
same suspicion and fear of the forest, that blank, impenetrable wall. C
The villagers are friendly and hospitable to strangers, offering them [609]
the best of whatever food and drink they have, and always clearing [574]
out a house where the traveler can rest in comfort and safety. But C
these villages are set among plantations in great clearings cut from 182 241
the heart of the forest around them. It is from the plantations that 361
the food comes, not from the forest, and for the villagers life is a constant battle to prevent their plantations from being overgrown.

They speak of the world beyond the plantations as being a fearful C
place, full of malevolent spirits and not fit to be lived in except by 776 182
animals and BaMbuti, which is what the village people call the 825
Pygmies. The villagers, some Bantu and some Sudanic, keep to their 829
plantations and seldom go into the forest unless it is absolutely necessary. For them it is a place of evil. They are outsiders.

But the BaMbuti are the real people of the forest. Whereas the P
other tribes are relatively recent arrivals, the Pygmies have been in 182

175 Reverend Paul Schebesta, set out from Vienna in the nineteen-twen-
114 ties to study them.

114 Schebesta's first trip was an over-all survey of the forest area, in
144 which he established the fact that this was a stronghold of the pure
Pygmy, as opposed to the "Pygmoid" in other parts of the equatorial
belt, where there has been intermarriage with Negro tribes. In subsequent trips Schebesta gathered material which showed that these
Ituri Pygmies—whose term for themselves, BaMbuti, he adopts—
are in fact racially distinct from the Negro peoples, Bantu and Sudanic, who live around them. This fact has been confirmed by later
174 genetic studies, up to the present. Though we cannot be sure, it
seems reasonable to assume that the BaMbuti were the original inhabitants of the great tropical rain forest stretching from the west coast right across to the open savanna country of the east, on the far side of the chain of lakes that divides the Congo from East Africa.

114 But when I read Schebesta's account of the Pygmies it just did not
533 ring true when compared with my own experiences on my first trip
to the Ituri. For instance, in one of his first books he says that the Pygmies are not great musicians, but that they sing only the simplest melodies and beat on drums and dance wild erotic dances. Even much later, after he had come to know the Pygmies better and had spent several years in the region, when he wrote his major work, running to several volumes, he devoted only a few pages to music, attributing little importance to it and dismissing it as simple and undeveloped. This could not have been further from the truth.

114 In several other ways I felt that all was not well with Schebesta's
177 account, particularly with his description of the relationship between
Pygmies and Negroes. He gave the impression that the Pygmies were dependent on the Negroes both for food and for metal products and that there was an unbreakable hereditary relationship by which a Pygmy and all his progeny were handed down in a Negro family, from father to son, and bound to it in a form of serfdom, not only

in one way. They are submissive, almost servile, and appear to have 181
no culture of their own. But at night in the initiation camp when 177
the last Negro had left, or off in the forest, those same Pygmies
were different people. They cast off one way of life and took on another,
and from the little I saw of their forest life it was as full and
satisfactory as village life seemed empty and meaningless.

The Pygmies are no more perfect than any other people, and life, 123
though kind to them, is not without hardships. But there was something 181
about the relationship between these simple, unaffected people
and their forest home that was captivating. And when the time
came that I had to leave, even though we were camped back near [533] •
the village, the Pygmies gathered around their fire on the eve of my
departure and sang their forest songs for me; and for the first time
I heard the voice of the molimo. Then I was sure that I could never
rest until I had come out again, free of any obligations to stay in
the village, free of any limitations of time, free simply to live and
roam the forest with the BaMbuti, its people; and free to let them
teach me in their own time what it was that made their life so different
from that of other people.

The evening before I left, before the singing started, three of 123
the great hunters took me off into the forest. They said they wanted 304
to be sure that I would come back again, so they thought they would
make me "of the forest." There was Njobo, the killer of elephants; [551]
his close friend and distant relative, Kolongo; and Moke, an elderly
Pygmy who never raised his voice, and to whom everyone listened
with respect. Kolongo held my head and Njobo casually took a rusty
arrow blade and cut tiny but deep vertical slits in the center of my
forehead and above each eye. He then gauged out a little flesh from
each slit and asked Kolongo for the medicine to put in. But Kolongo
had forgotten to bring it, so while I sat on a log, not feeling very
bright, Kolongo ambled off to get the medicine, and Moke wandered
around cheerfully humming to himself, looking for something to eat.

123 It began to rain, and Njobo decided that he was not going to stay
304 and get wet, so he left. Moke was on the point of doing the same
when Kolongo returned. Obviously anxious to get the whole thing
[752] over with as little ceremony as possible and return to his warm dry hut, he rubbed the black ash-paste hard into the cuts until it filled them and congealed the blood that still flowed. And there it is today, ash made from the plants of the forest, a part of the forest that is a part of the flesh, carried by every self-respecting Pygmy male. And as long as it is with me it will always call me back.

The women thought it a great joke when I finally got back to camp, wet and still rather shaky. They crowded around to have a
[152] look and burst into shrieks of laughter. They said that now I was a
[885] real man with the marks of a hunter, so I would have to get married and then I would never be able to leave. Moke looked slyly at me. He had not explained that the marks had quite that significance.

123 It was later that evening when the men were singing that I heard
533 the molimo. By then I had learned to speak the language quite well,
534 and I had heard them discussing whether or not to bring the molimo out; there was some opposition on the grounds that it was "a thing of the forest," and not of the village, but old Moke said it was good for me to hear it before I left, as it would surely not let me stay long away but would bring me safely back.

First I heard it call out of the night from the other side of the Nepussi River, where three years earlier I had helped Pat Putnam build a dam. The dam was still there, though breached by continuous flooding. The hospital where Pat had given his life lay just beyond, now an overgrown jungle, only a few crumbling vine-covered walls left standing, the rest lost in a wilderness of undergrowth. Somewhere over there, in the darkness, the molimo now called; it sounded like someone singing but it was not a human voice. It was a deep, gentle, lowing sound, sometimes breaking off into a quiet falsetto, sometimes growling like a leopard. As the men sang

their songs of praise to the forest, the molimo answered them, first 123
on this side, then on that, moving around so swiftly and silently 533 534
that it seemed to be everywhere at once.

Then, still unseen, it was right beside me, not more than two feet away, on the other side of a small but thick wall of leaves. As it replied to the song of the men, who continued to sing as though nothing were happening, the sound was sad and wistful, and immensely beautiful. Several of the older men were sitting near me, and one of them, without even looking up, asked me if I wanted to see the molimo. He then continued singing as though he didn't particularly care what my reply was, but I knew that he did. I was so overcome by curiosity that I almost said "yes"; I had been fighting hard to stop myself from trying to peer through the leaves to where it was now growling away almost angrily. But I knew that Pygmy youths were not allowed to see it until they had proved themselves as hunters, as adults in Pygmy eyes, and although I now carried the marks on my forehead I still felt unqualified. So I simply said, no, I did not think I was ready to see it.

The molimo gave a great burst of song and with a wild rush swept across the camp, surrounded by a dozen youths packed so tightly together that I could see nothing, and disappeared into the forest. Those left in the camp made no comment; they just kept on with their song, and after a while the voice of the molimo, replying to them, became fainter and fainter and was finally lost in the night and in the depths of the forest from where it had come.

This experience convinced me that here was something that I 123
could do that was really worth while, and that I was not doing it justice by coming armed with cameras and recording equipment, as I had on this trip. The Pygmies were more than curiosities to be filmed, and their music was more than a quaint sound to be put on

765 talking, some sleeping, some sobbing softly. The men started singing, and after a while I heard their song echoed from far off in the forest and recognized the wistful sound, hollow and ghostly, answering the men with snatches of their own song, sometimes singing its own variations, sometimes breaking off into low, growling, animal noises. The men continued singing as though nothing were happening, and I heard the molimo coming closer, circling around the camp. The women were all quiet in their huts now, and the fire had burned low; the camp was pitch dark except for an occasional glow where the ashes of some family hearth still glowed faintly outside a hut. Even near a village, Cephu never built huts in imitation of the [342] Negroes, and his camp was a typical forest camp, a close little circle [177] of small conical huts, made of a framework of saplings covered en- [361] tirely with leaves.

The molimo was silent for a few minutes and I looked at the faces of the men around our fire, which was flickering faintly in the middle of the camp. They were all staring at the flames, their eyes wide open but seeing things I had never seen. Only Cephu was lying back in his chair, and he seemed to be asleep. There was a slight movement beside me and I heard the molimo almost in my ear. The 765 sound was gentler and a little sad; it was now singing closely with 534 the men, as if answering their song. 533 Amabosu had joined the group and was on my left, and I saw that he had his hands up to his mouth. Then in the shadows I saw that he was singing into what looked like a long length of bamboo, a sort of trumpet, which was producing that eerie, hollow sound. After a few minutes he stood up. One of Tungana's sons also stood up, and I could see that he was holding the other end of the trumpet. The two danced around the fire, waving the bamboo tube over the flames, Amabosu singing into it all the time and the men's chorus growing louder and louder. Then the two performers dashed suddenly away into the forest behind the camp, and after a few leopardlike growls the trumpet was heard no

765 more. The men continued singing for about another hour, but as
533 by then Cephu and the rest of his family had gone inside their huts,
[534] they stopped abruptly and returned to the main camp.

The next evening the singing was around a fire in the middle of the main camp. After all, the molimo was Njobo's, and Cephu just went to sleep, so why should we go to his camp? A few men from Cephu's family came over, but not Cephu. The singing went on for about four hours, but the molimo did not appear again. The third night it was the same, except that nobody turned up from Cephu's camp.

[858] I thought this a little strange and asked Moke about it. He said that normally one would not call out the molimo for a child; that was why nobody was really enthusiastic, but Cephu had insisted. Besides, the molimo should only be in the forest, not so close to a Negro village. It was all right to sing molimo songs as long as there were no Negroes about, but even then it was not good to sing them
[776] near a village. The molimo itself, however, should come out only in the forest, where it belonged, and there was a lot of work attached, as it had to be given food to eat, water to drink, and fire to keep it warm. He stopped there and could not be persuaded to go any further. He just waved his hands in the air and said emphatically that this molimo was empty, meaningless, a farce.

765 At the end of a week the mourning period prescribed by the Ne-
177 groes was over; the women, who were meant to wail at sunrise, noon
186 and sunset, stopped wailing. A relative of Cephu's Negro "master" had come over to the village the night before, and the men had had a final burst of singing for him, but with their tongues in their cheeks. Moke told me not to think that this was a real molimo; it was what they did for the villagers to make them think their molimo was the same as the Pygmies'. The villagers also make use of a musical instrument called the *molimo,* but it is meant to represent the

a tangle of fallen trees and ever-spreading vines and creepers. Here P 484 114
and there where the *fito*—the sapling used by villagers for building [824]
their houses—had once grown, the tangle was even worse. Once [342]
the forest is cut it grows up again, not as the mighty primeval forest [137]
it was, but as a jungle of secondary vegetation that in places is almost
impenetrable. We went in single file, for the most part following a P 484
path; when we left it the youths in front flashed their hatchets above 481 114
their heads, slashing away overhanging branches and vines without [487]
even slowing up, to make it easier for us to follow. But where they
cut they left sharp jagged ends sticking out at just about eye-level
for me. When newly cut these dangerous points are plainly visible
and easy to avoid, but when they become old and dirty they are a
real menace.

After about half an hour we reached the place where the more C
ambitious Pygmies had tried to make a plantation; this was the 484 824
farthest point from the new village of Epulu that the Negroes had 776
reached when searching for the wood to build their houses. Beyond P 484
this they did not care to venture, except for an occasional one such [241]
as Kaweki, who made his living by trapping fish in the forest streams,
and those who came to help him or to carry his fish to the market.
Beyond this point, in Negro eyes, the forest was evil—full of animals, malevolent spirits, and Pygmies.

But for the people of the forest the world began at this point. P 181
There was a stream nearby, just beyond the "plantation," near a 484
site where I had recorded the forest songs of these same Pygmies * [126]
three years earlier. In this stream, for no obvious reason, each of the [135]
five youths washed carefully, as though literally ridding their very [515]
feet of the dust of the village. Then they splashed through the cool, P
clear water and set off again with even greater vigor than before, [533] •

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* Folkways Records: FE 4457, Pygmies of the Ituri Forest
FE 4483, Music of the Ituri Forest

181
484 singing snatches of songs and shouting back and forth to one another
533 about all the animals they were going to kill and eat.

152 Occasionally we heard an echo of our own voices coming back
522 from the depths of the forest. Then we stopped, and one by one
822 the young men shouted bold phrases to imaginary maidens, holding their noses and mouths, ready to stifle the shriek of laughter that would come when the same rude challenge was shouted back at them. They clapped one another on the back and held onto one another for support as they laughed, inventing all sorts of things they would do and say to any girl who answered them in such a
152 way. The Pygmy is not in the least self-conscious about showing
512 his emotions; he likes to laugh until tears come to his eyes and he is too weak to stand. He then sits down or lies on the ground and laughs still louder.

137 As we went on the forest became more spacious, and it seemed
484 lighter, although the trees still met high overhead and shut out all direct sunlight. There was no need to worry about overhanging branches now, for here the forest was virgin, untouched by the sacrilegious hand of the village cultivator, and clear of heavy undergrowth. The ground was soft underfoot, carpeted with leaves that
[481] sometimes concealed a projecting root. But the pygmies knew where every obstacle was, even though they could not see it, and they picked up their feet to avoid tripping.

On all sides we could see for twenty or thirty yards. The giant trunks of the old trees were surrounded by slender, branchless saplings, all so far apart that we could wander off the path freely at
[487] almost any point. Here and there the main path was crossed by a smaller path made by some animal, and Kenge frequently turned off
481 and followed the animal trail, beckoning me to follow. A few min-
484 utes later he would stop and sit down on his bundle, and then
186 when the rest appeared along the main path he would jump to his feet and make fun of them for "walking like the BaNgwana." The

224 behind Manyalibo's chosen site. Almost immediately there was a
shout from Njobo, and Kenge bounded across the camp, picking up
[516] a hunting net as he went. Not more than fifty yards away we found
Njobo standing, tense, at the end of a fallen tree, peering inside the
hollow trunk. Masisi and Manyalibo came running up through the
glade, and taking the net they quickly put it up around the tree
trunk, while Njobo hurried off and returned with his spear.

Looking into the black, gaping hole I saw two eyes, glowing
bright red and unblinking, staring at me from the darkness. Njobo
[825] had seen a *sondu*, a highly coveted kind of antelope, and had cornered
[136] it in a sharp bend of the river so that it had been forced to take
[151] refuge in the tree trunk, trapping itself. All this had taken place so
silently that only Kenge's sharp ears had picked up the noises. When
the net was firmly fixed Manyalibo stood on the tree trunk and
thrust a long stick inside, keeping himself well clear of the opening.
The forest antelopes have small but sharp horns, and when trapped
they are vicious and dangerous. The sondu, snuffling with anger and
pain, came bolting out so fast that it tore the mesh of the net. It
lay there struggling and bleating, but only for an instant. All three
hunters were on top of it, and two of them held it down while Njobo
cut its throat with the blade of his spear. He looked up at me happily
and said, "This is going to be a good camp, for the forest has
given us meat before we have even built our houses."

484 Within another fifteen minutes the first of the women arrived.
482 They had heard the thunder and had hurried, traveling (as they can
when they want to) as fast as any man, in spite of the loads on their
361 backs and the children on their hips. They were singing as they
342 strode into the camp with long, graceful steps, and, just as the men
481 533 had done, each cast a quick look around and chose a spot where she
would build a house for her family. Njobo's wife, pretty young
361 Masamba, was among them. She went to where Njobo had put
342 412 his net, threw down the load from her back, and without stopping

For an hour the
others lay around the fire, while I was pushed into a corner, and 517
discussed where they would go to hunt the next day and which girls 521
they would flirt with. They poked sleepily at the fire, sending up 512
showers of sparks and filling the hut with smoke. In all the huts around us, families were chatting among themselves in a drowsy way, and occasionally some eavesdropper shouted a suitable comment, bringing a burst of laughter from all the nearby huts. The leaf walls keep out no sound at all, and anything said in an ordinary speaking voice can be heard four or five huts away. But before long the voices got sleepier and sleepier, and finally the only sounds were the chirping of crickets, the soft swishing of the already swollen Lelo, and the quiet falsetto of Makubasi as he sat outside his hut, all alone
by a blazing fire. He held his baby son on his lap, and sang a lul- [533]
laby, half to himself and half to the child. He was still singing when [854]
I went to sleep.

The next morning the camp was up at dawn, and before it was 512
properly light there was hardly a soul left about—only old Tungana, [887]
sitting where his son Makubasi had sat the night before and like
his son singing to the baby on his knee. Kenge said that some of [224]
the men had gone hunting early, because they needed a lot of meat [765]
to begin the molimo festival for Balekimito and they did not want to
start until they had plenty of food. The rest of the men and women [313]
were out cutting the leaves and saplings needed to finish building the [314]
camp. We went to join them, not far off. The rest of the day we spent making the simple furniture of a Pygmy household.

Sticks lashed together and bound by vine thongs to a frame make 352
one of the most uncomfortable beds in the world. The sticks them- [284]
selves are comfortable enough, but for some reason these beds are made so that each end bends sharply upward and however you lie
on it the effect is worse than being in a badly slung hammock. Some [513]
Pygmies don't bother with a bed but just put the sticks on the ground and lie on them, or sleep on dry leaves. Tables are made

THE SONG OF THE FOREST

765 182 Makubasi wandered about aimlessly, poking here and there from habit to see if there was any tasty fruit to be had for the picking, but it was too dark to see.

765 534 [533] [522] Just as I was about to ask where the others had gone they reappeared, announcing their presence with low whistles that sounded like the call of a night bird. They were in two pairs, each pair carrying between them, over their shoulders, a long slender object. Even at that moment I wondered if they would veer off into the complete blackness of the forest before I could see more closely, but they came on toward us. Madyadya was carrying the rear end of what proved to be a huge tube of some kind, fifteen feet long. He gestured proudly and said, "See, this is our molimo!" Then he turned and putting his mouth to the end of the trumpet, which it was, he blew a long, raucous raspberry. Everyone doubled up with laughter, the first sound they had made since leaving camp.

765 534 123 177 I was slightly put out by this sacrilege and was about to blame it rather pompously on irreligious youth, when I saw something that upset me even more. I do not know exactly what I had expected, but I knew a little about molimo trumpets and that they were sometimes made out of bamboo. I suppose I had expected an object elaborately carved, decorated with patterns full of ritual significance and symbolism, something sacred, to be revered, the very sight or touch of which might be thought of as dangerous. I felt that I had a right, in the heart of the tropical rain forest, to expect something wonderful and exotic. But now I saw that the instrument which produced such a surprisingly rude sound, shattering the stillness as it shattered my illusions, was not made of bamboo or wood, and it certainly was not carved or decorated in any way. It was a length of metal drainpipe, neatly threaded at each end, though somewhat bent in the middle. The second trumpet was just the same, shining and sanitary, but only half the length.

Everyone was looking at me to see what my reactions would be.

765 534 123 177 I asked, keeping my voice low, how it was that for the molimo, which was so sacred to them, they should use water piping stolen from roadside construction gangs, instead of using the traditional materials.

Evidently now that they had the trumpets in their possession there was no longer any need for silence, for they answered calmly and loudly with a counter-question. "What does it matter what the molimo is made of? This one makes a great sound, and, besides, it
[322] does not rot like wood. It is much trouble to make a wooden one, and then it rots away and you have to make another."

[825] [533] Ausu, to prove how well it sounded, took the end of the longer pipe, which evidently belonged to Manyalibo, and all of a sudden the forest was filled with the sound of trumpeting elephants. The others clapped their hands with pleasure and said, "You see? Doesn't it sound well?"

My conservative feelings were still wounded, however, and it gave me some pleasure to see the difficulty the Pygmies had on the way back, carrying a fifteen-foot length of drainpipe through the forest. It was pitch dark now, though the moon was full, yet we still followed only the smallest animal trails, this being the quickest route. Frequently Madyadya, carrying the front end of his foster-father's trumpet, turned too sharply, following the trail, so that whoever was carrying the rear end was forced off the path and the trumpet became jammed between two trees. But in spite of these mishaps we returned almost as quickly as we had come.

When we came to the first stream we all stopped. The moonlight was just strong enough for me to see both trumpets laid carefully in the water, then lifted up so that the water ran through from end to end. "The molimo likes to drink," I was told. We washed our feet and continued, but at every stream we came to the performance was repeated, both trumpets being immersed and allowed to "drink." Every now and again, whoever was at the rear end of a trumpet

765 long trumpet, with Madyadya holding the front on his shoulder,
534 pointing it over the river toward the camp. Once again the night
765 was shattered as though there were a whole herd of elephants trumpet-
534
• 533 ing shrilly all around us. When the echoes died away, the camp
825 across the river had fallen silent. Ausu blew into the trumpet again,
and this time it was as if a leopard were growling angrily nearby.
[201] One of the youths clapped himself under the armpit, as Pygmies
frequently do, and said to himself, "That is its voice, just exactly."
He clapped himself again with delight, and gave a little growl of his
own.

765 Little more than a minute had passed when Amabosu, the great
533 singer, appeared from the shadows below us. He looked at us without
156 saying anything, without smiling or making any greeting. His eyes
781
534 had the strange look they often took on when he was singing or
playing the drums in a dance in the village. They seemed to be seeing something quite different from what was going on in front of
[825] them. He went up to Ausu and took the molimo from him and
gently filled the forest with strange sounds—the rumblings and
growls of buffalos and leopards, the mighty call of the elephant, the plaintive cooing of the dove. Interspersed were snatches of song, transformed by the trumpet into a sound quite unlike the song of men—richer, softer, more distant and unapproachable.

765 He continued blowing as we moved off, down the slope and to
534 the bank of the river, but when we plunged into the water and
123 waded across, the two trumpets left us and were carried upstream.
[533] They growled and bellowed somewhere behind us as we made our
765 way along the path to the camp. In the clearing the men were stand-
562 ing up to see us arrive, and the women were hurrying about doing
what they had to do before shutting themselves up in their huts. The
[858] voice of the molimo had warned them that it was time to retire. The
children had all been chased inside. One by one leaf doors were

765 ceremonies of the local Negro tribes, nor did it follow any prescribed
[534 ritualistic details beyond a general over-all pattern. It was plain that
778] the molimo trumpets were not considered as highly sacred objects in
themselves; what was important, for some reason, was the sound
[186] they produced. It was also very clear that the people of the forest
wanted to be quite sure that the village world was well sealed off,
because before the men gathered together that evening I found that
the path leading out of the camp toward the village had been closed.
A fallen branch and some logs had been dragged across it, shutting
out the profane outside world.

The molimo of the Pygmies is not concerned with ritual or magic. In fact, it is so devoid of ritual, expressed either in action or words, that it is difficult to see what it *is* concerned with. Every day, around midday, a couple of youths would go around the camp, just as they had done this day, collecting offerings of food and firewood from hut to hut, for the molimo concerns everyone, and everyone must contribute. And each evening the women and children shut themselves up in their huts after the evening meal, for the molimo is mainly the concern of the men. And when the women have retired the men sit around the kumamolimo—the hearth of the molimo—and gaze into the molimo fire. Nearby a basket hangs, full of the offerings of food that will be eaten later. But first the men must sing, for this is the real work of the molimo, as they say; to eat and to sing, to eat and to sing. Yet behind these apparently simple outer trappings of the festival there was an atmosphere of almost overwhelming expectancy.

765 That first night, after I had eaten my meal, I went over to the
• 533 molimo fire, halfway between Manyalibo's hut and that of his daughter
534 Kondabate and her husband Ausu, where the men were already
gathering. I noticed that Amabosu, the singer, was not there. I knew
why when, a few minutes after the singing had begun, I heard the
voice of the molimo answering, way off by itself in the forest. It

no longer worried me that the trumpet was a metal drainpipe in- 765
stead of a piece of bamboo or wood, because now that I could not see 533
it I realized that Ausu was right. It was the sound that mattered. As 534
the men sang in the camp, the voice of the molimo echoed their
song, moving about continually so that it seemed to be everywhere
at once. During a lull in the singing it started giving animal growls,
and the men looked around to make sure that all the women were
safely in their huts. Almost immediately Amabosu and Madyadya [481]
came running into the camp from the far end, past Cephu's camp,
picking their feet up high in the air so that more than ever they
seemed to be floating above the ground they trod. They came right
up to the fire and squatted down either side of it, the front of the
trumpet still held on Madyadya's shoulder as Amabosu warbled
softly into the other end.

I noticed that the trumpet was still wet; it must have been given 765
a "drink" just before it was carried into the camp. Now both youths 534
stood up, and with Amabosu singing all the time, in reply to the 372
song of the men, Madyadya took the end of the trumpet in his hands [533]
and waved it up and down, passing it through the flames of the
molimo fire and over the heads of all of us sitting there. Some of
the men took up hot ashes and rubbed them over the trumpet, and
some even put live coals in at the far end. As Amabosu sang harder
and louder, sparks flew out over Madyadya's shoulder, disappearing
into the night with the song.

Then the two of them went dancing off, around the camp once 765
and into the forest. There were a few last defiant bellows from the 534
direction of the river, and no more was heard. The men stopped 765
singing and prepared to eat. Two caldrons had been boiling over the 264
fire, and both were now ready. One contained rice, the other a kind [252]
of spinach made from the leaves of the manioc plant. Eaten together [262]
they are delicious. I wondered if there would be any precedence as
to who should eat first, or if there would be any ritual, but there

765 was neither. Everyone ate his fill as and when he pleased, a couple of
264 the older men saying they would wait until the youngsters had finished before they ate. But they did not wait for long. I was told, however, that everyone *had* to eat, just as no adult male was allowed to sleep but *had* to sing while molimo singing was in progress. Ap-
765 parently one of the greatest crimes that a Pygmy male can commit,
688 if not the greatest, is to be found asleep when the molimo is singing.
[536] One of the men stood up, and miming as all Pygmies love to do, he showed how they used to search for sleeping men, a spear under each arm, and how if they found one they would spear him in the stomach and kill him completely and for ever. I was told that then his body would be buried under the kumamolimo and nobody would be allowed to mention his death, even to remark on his absence. The
[825] women would be told that the molimo itself, the great animal of the forest, had carried off one of their number, but like the men they would ask no questions and would never again mention the missing man.

765 The molimo was often referred to as "the animal of the forest,"
825 and the women were supposed to believe that it really was an animal,
534 and that to see it would bring death. That of course is why they
562 were all bundled off to bed with the children before the trumpet was ever brought into camp. And even when it *was* brought in it was often shielded by a number of youths so that if any woman should happen to look, she would see nothing. The animal sounds it produced were certainly realistic, but I wondered what the women thought when it sang. What kind of animal was it that one moment could make such threatening sounds, and the next instant sing more beautifully than anything else in the whole forest?

765 I remembered again Ausu's saying that the only important thing
533 about the trumpet was the fact that it had a good voice and could
539 sing well. I was reminded of the Pygmy legend of the Bird with the
825 Most Beautiful Song. This bird was found by a young boy who

heard such a Beautiful Song that he had to go and see who was singing. 765
When he found the Bird he brought it back to the camp to feed 533 •
it. His father was annoyed at having to give food to the Bird, but 539 825
the son pleaded and the Bird was fed. The next day the Bird sang again; it sang the Most Beautiful Song in the Forest, and again the boy went to it and brought it back to feed it. This time the father was even more angered, but once again he gave in and fed the Bird. The third day (most Pygmy stories repeat themselves at least three times) the same thing happened. But this time the father took the Bird from his son and told his son to go away. When his son had left, the father killed the Bird, the Bird with the Most Beautiful Song in the Forest, and with the Bird he killed the Song, and with the Song he killed himself and he dropped dead, completely dead, dead for ever.

There are other legends about song, all telling how important 765
it is, and I wondered just why. I looked at the others sitting with me 533
around the kumamolimo. The flames from the fire flickered, lighting up the serious faces, shining brightly in their large, honest eyes. Some gazed straight into the fire, others leaned back and looked up into the trees as they sang. A few lay down on their hunting nets,
but they were awake and they sang with the rest. Then I saw that [854]
Makubasi had his infant son on his lap, holding the boy tightly against him, wrapped in his powerful arms, rocking backward and forward. He was singing quietly, with his mouth up against his son's ear. The words of the song, like the words of most molimo songs, were few. They simply said, "The Forest is Good."

The Pygmies seemed bound by few set rules. There was a general 765
pattern of behavior to which everyone more or less conformed, but [183]
with great latitude given and taken. Even on this occasion, when all [854]
women and children were supposed to be abed, if Makubasi felt like getting his son and singing to him at the kumamolimo, nobody
objected or thought anything of it. Possibly this was because the [533]

765 baby was too young to know what was going on, and so could not
533 tell the others what he saw; possibly simply because it did not matter very much anyway, for the Song was not only Beautiful, it was Good and Powerful.

It took me some time to realize just how important song was. That first night I just thought of it as being a beautiful sound. After we had eaten the food that had been offered to the molimo we sang again, and at one point the younger men got up and danced around the fire, excitedly, but without any of the frivolity that would come later. This was the first night of the molimo and everyone was on his best behavior. Then when the dancing was over we heard the trumpet again, and as we sang it sang back to us, getting farther and farther away. As it went it carried our song with it, deeper and deeper into the forest. Finally we could hear it no more, and only the echoes of our own voices came back to us from the night.

765 Not long after that old Moke stretched and yawned and said
533 that he was tired and that everyone should go to sleep and let him
513 sleep. But the younger men paid no attention and went on singing, so Moke resignedly joined in. But after another half-hour, when it was not very long before dawn, even the younger men decided to
[372] quit. Moke picked up the log he had been sitting on, the end of
[373] which was glowing in the hot ashes, and shuffled back to his hut, swinging the log so that it glowed brightly and lit his way across the camp. Manyalibo simply stretched out where he was, right beside the molimo fire, and went to sleep there. A number of youths did likewise, their hunting nets making comfortable beds, but I went back to my hut. I found Kenge there, fast asleep. He was on my bed, wrapped in my blanket, snoring contentedly, and the hut was filled with smoke from the fire he had lit beside him.

765 In spite of the hunting that had to be done each day, the men
533 sang in this way every night. And every night we looked to see who
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688

would come from Cephu's camp, for the amount of interest that 765
Cephu showed in the molimo was a topic for constant discussion 533
and criticism. Masimongo, who had relatives in Cephu's camp, al- 578
ways upheld him when he did not appear himself or when his little 688
group made a poor showing. But Manyalibo allowed no such excuses, and his voice carried much more weight. He said, good conservative that he was, that all men should take part in the molimo regardless of what camp they belonged to, if they were anywhere near at all. Then he went through the mime showing what would have happened in the old days, to anyone who did not attend and was found sleeping. I thought momentarily of Kenge.

But the molimo was not only a matter of singing late into the 765
night. Each morning, too, there was activity, though of a different 533
nature. The evenings were serious, the older men taking the lead 535
in the singing and leaving the dancing largely to the younger men. 88
Sometimes there was a lot of horseplay, but the older men, like Moke, kept an eye on what was going on and held the youngsters in check. Often the molimo fire was made into two fires, the older men sitting at one and the youngsters at the other, and then all the dancing went on at the youths' fire while the elders sat at theirs and just sang, and watched their sons with dreamy eyes.

But in the mornings the youths came into their own completely. 765
Before the first glimmer of light filtered through into the camp, 882
those of us who had managed to get to sleep were waked by a violent 533
and raucous trumpeting from just outside the camp. This brought 534
cries of protest from the older men. Some of them appeared sleepily at the entrance to their huts and shouted, "Animal! Go away and keep quiet and let me sleep!" but to no avail. From the far end of the camp, near the path leading to Cephu's clearing, a wild cavalcade of youths swept into view, shouting and yelling, clustered so thickly that it was impossible to see the trumpet they were carrying. But it was there, with Amabosu blowing it. It blasted and shrilled and

765 growled and bellowed, and it rampaged around the camp, overturn-
882 ing any of the crude chairs that had been left outside, scattering the
534 remains of fires in all directions, and beating on the roofs of huts to
533 wake everyone up. Sometimes the youths seemed to divide at random into two sides and have a sort of tug of war with the trumpet, some trying to lead it in one direction, some in the other. It was not a real contest of strength, only acting. I wondered if perhaps this represented the original struggle for possession of the molimo, a struggle which some say was between Pygmies and animals, or others say was between men and women.

765 Ekianga took a prominent part in these morning affrays. He used
688 to lead the youths, always holding two spears, one under each arm,
536 pointing down at the ground as though he were looking for any sleeping person who should have been taking part in the activity. Sometimes he acted it out, stopping as though he saw an offender. Then he danced about and finally jabbed the spear blades at the earth.

765 I said to Kenge that this was what would happen to him if he
688 went off and took my bed and blanket again before the evening
183 singing had finished. Kenge laughed loudly and shouted across the
115
123 camp what I had said. But then he became serious and said that he had been singing all the time until Moke had first said he wanted to go to sleep. "When the old men want to sleep it is all right for us to sleep," he said. Then he added laconically, "And of course if we are tired it is all right for us to go to sleep, naturally." He thought the conversation not very interesting, so he gave an animal call and ran with great leaps and bounds, like the antelope he was named for, across the camp to join in the tug of war.

765 If anyone had given offense the previous day, usually by being
578 too argumentative, the youths in the morning rampage paid particular attention to the offender's hut. Cephu's camp of course came in for the most attention, and although Cephu complained loudly

123 expectancy. Every evening, when the women shut themselves up,
765 pretending that they were afraid to see "the animal of the forest";
[562] every evening, when the men gathered around the fire, pretending
[825] they thought that the women thought the drainpipes were animals; every evening, when the trumpet drainpipes imitated leopards and elephants and buffalos—every evening, when all this make-believe was going on, I felt that something very real and very great was going on beneath it, something that everyone else took for granted, and about which only I was ignorant.

765 It was as though the songs which lured the "animal" to the
533 fireside also invoked some other kind of presence. As the evenings
535 wore on toward morning, the songs got more and more serious, and
781 the atmosphere not exactly tense but charged with an emotion powerful enough to send the dancers swirling through the molimo fire as though its flames and red-hot coals held no heat, as though the glowing embers were cold ashes. Yet there was nothing fanatic or frenzied
[825] about their action in dancing through the fire. Then there was always that point when the "animal" left the camp and returned to the forest, taking the presence with it. I could feel it departing as the mellow, wistful voice of the molimo got farther and farther away.

765 The morning rampages carried no such presence with them; they
534 seemed more tangible both in actuality and in purpose. I learned that after these rampages the trumpets were brought back to the Lelo River, just above where the men bathed, and immersed there during the daytime so that the women would not see them. One day there was a terrible storm and the Lelo rose four or five feet, transformed into a torrent. When the rain abated in the late afternoon Madyadya went to look for the trumpets and found that one of them had been
[522] washed away. This caused tremendous hilarity, though of course everyone tried to disguise what they were talking about in front of the women. The women, playing the same game, pretended not to

115 But, most important, he[1] told me, or rather
778 showed me, how the Pygmies believe in the goodness of the forest.
182 "The forest is a father and mother to us," he said, "and like a
181 father or mother it gives us everything we need—food, clothing, shelter, warmth . . . and affection. Normally everything goes well, because the forest is good to its children, but when things go wrong there must be a reason."

I wondered what he would say now, because I knew that the village people, in times of crisis, believe that they have been cursed either by some evil spirit or by a witch or sorcerer. But not the Pygmies; their logic is simpler and their faith stronger, because their world is kinder.

Moke showed me this when he said, "Normally everything goes well in our world. But at night when we are sleeping, sometimes things go wrong, because we are not awake to stop them from going
[136] wrong. Army ants invade the camp; leopards may come in and steal a hunting dog or even a child. If we were awake these things would not happen. So when something big goes wrong, like illness or bad hunting or death, it must be because the forest is sleeping and not
[533] looking after its children. So what do we do? We wake it up. We wake it up by singing to it, and we do this because we want it to awaken happy. Then everything will be well and good again. So when our world is going well then also we sing to the forest because we want it to share our happiness."

115 All this I had heard before, but I had not realized quite so clearly
778 that this was what the molimo was all about. It was as though the
776 nightly chorus were an intimate communion between a people and
781
182 their god, the forest. Moke even talked about this, but when he did so he stopped working on his bow and turned his wrinkled old face to stare at me with his deep, brown, smiling eyes. He told me how all Pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they don't know, and that is why the name really does not matter very

[1] [i.e., Moke - analyst]

much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him; perhaps 115 778
only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So 776
how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must 781 182
be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So
when we sing, we sing to the forest."

The complete faith of the Pygmies in the goodness of their forest 778
world is perhaps best of all expressed in one of their great molimo 765
songs, one of the songs that is sung fully only when someone has 533
died. At no time do their songs ask for this or that to be done, for
the hunt to be made better or for someone's illness to be cured; it is
not necessary. All that is needful is to awaken the forest, and everything
will come right. But suppose it does not, suppose that someone
dies, then what? Then the men sit around their evening fire, as I
had been doing with them for the past month, and they sing songs
of devotion, songs of praise, to wake up the forest and rejoice it, to
make it happy again. Of the disaster that has befallen them they sing,
in this one great song, "There is darkness all around us; but if darkness
is, and the darkness is of the forest, then the darkness must be
good."

As Moke looked at me and spoke I wondered if this was how he 123
had once explained things to his own son. Now I began to under- 778
stand what happened at night when fifteen feet of drainpipe was [534]
carried into the camp and someone blew or sang into it; and I began
to understand what the "presence" was—it was surely the presence
of the Forest itself, in all its beauty and goodness.

Moke turned back to his bow and began whittling again.

"You will soon see things of which you have never heard, and which you have never seen. Then you will understand things that I can never tell you. But you must stay awake—you may see them only once."

He started humming to himself, and I left.

5

The Crime of Cephu, the Bad Hunter

765 EVERY NIGHT the men gathered to sing the songs of the molimo,
• 533 and every morning the youths awakened the camp with their shouts
and yells. This went on week after week, yet the daily life of the
hunting group continued as though nothing particularly unusual was
[152] happening. The men were more sleepy in the mornings, and sometimes
tempers were short, but never for long. The necessities of hunting
and gathering for a living did not allow it.

512 As soon as the camp was light and there was no further danger of the molimo's making an appearance, the women emerged from their huts and went down to the river to bathe and to collect water

765 not simply run; they seemed to float over the ground at tremendous
535 speed, their feet high in the air. I saw why I had been told not to
481 come out, because the youths that were armed with sticks and branches on the flanks of the trumpets kept on lashing out viciously, at imaginary intruders. When Ekianga, or any of the others who were running about independently, beating on roof tops and tearing off leaves, came too close, they had to leap from side to side to avoid being hit. Each person seemed concerned only with what he was doing. Nobody so much as looked at anyone else.

765 Then the rest of the men came out of their huts, one by one,
533 went over to the kumamolimo and began singing. It was no tenta-
372 tive, sleepy sing-song, as it was on many mornings, but singing in real earnest, as loud and as vigorous as at the height of the night. The molimo fire was fanned up into a blaze, and youths ran swiftly around the camp picking up bits of wood from everywhere, dancing back to the kumamolimo and throwing them onto the fire. Then, with a wild rush, the two trumpets joined together and were surrounded by a single dancing forest, and sounding a martial air they tramped around the edge of the fire and disappeared into the trees. They seemed to cross the river and climb up the hill on the far side, until the sound of our own voices drowned the more distant music of the trumpets.

765 For the whole of that day everyone's nerves seemed to be on edge.
152 Asofalinda was in a rage about something and she strode up and down the length of the camp, shaking her arm and pointing at everyone in turn, telling them they were all lazy good-for-nothings. Masisi was in one of his worst tempers and lashed out with an acid tongue at anyone foolish enough to try and talk to him. Manyalibo sulked and said it was pretty poor that it should be so difficult to fill one molimo basket. There should be two, three, or even four baskets, and they should be full all the time, he said. He made some remark about Masamba's not having done much to help, so Masamba threw

an empty basket at him and said, "There, you make so much noise, 765
go and fill it yourself." Even before the hunt went off there were 152
two full baskets hanging up, and by evening there were four.

The change between the atmosphere of the morning and that of the evening was unbelievable. Usually when a day starts off in such ill humor it continues in that way to the bitter end. But the hunt seemed to restore everyone's good spirits, even though it was not outstandingly successful. I did not go on the hunt, but stayed in camp. And all day long the girls were singing in Kondabate's house, and the old woman was with them.

After we had eaten the evening meal Manyalibo went around the 765
camp himself and took a piece of wood from the fire outside each 533 •
hut, placing them all on the molimo fire. Then, before it was com- [372]
pletely dark, the men gathered to sing. Even Cephu was there, and the singing was light and cheerful. The girls that had been in Konda-
bate's hut came out as soon as we started. They had painted their [302]
bodies with black kangay juice, and in their hair they had twined [301]
circlets of vine, one strand of which stuck way out in front, over their foreheads, with a small bunch of feathers dangling from the end.
They kept together in a tight little group, their bodies swaying in 765
unison to the songs of the men. Then they began to dance, still so 535
close together that I could not see between them. They danced all around the group, forcing us closer and closer to the fire. In a snaking, graceful line they seemed to take charge of the music, increasing the tempo until the men were as exhausted as they were, and we all stopped for a rest.

By then it was dark, and I expected the girls and the rest of the 765
women and children to retire to their huts. But they had built a fire 562
of their own at the edge of the molimo group, and there they all sat, chatting inconsequentially as though they did this every night.
It was then that I first noticed the old woman. Under a great head- [142]
dress of vine and feathers her hatchet face looked more angular than [292]

765 ever, thin and straight, with eyes still wide and unblinking and, it
562 seemed, unseeing. She sat in the middle of the group, hugging her
142 knees. Her skin sagged in withered folds, her bones stuck out in
[292] ugly lines and bumps. She made a strange contrast with the background of young feminine beauty and vitality. The only time she so much as moved was when Kondabate joined the group.

765 Kondabate, the belle with filed teeth and great diamond-shaped
562 scarifications on her stomach; Kondabate the beauty, who after two
832 years of married life still preserved her fine upstanding breasts and
[304] trim figure—but also Kondabate the childless. She had on a headdress like the old woman's, and her eyes, too, seemed unnaturally
765 wide and staring. She was smiling and happy—until she sat down
562 opposite the old lady. That was when the old woman moved, looking
152 up from the fire into Kondabate's eyes. In an instant Kondabate seemed to lose her smile and her happiness. She became as empty as the withered old shell of a woman in front of her, and she sat as quietly, staring into the flickering flames.

765 After a while the men started singing again, but gently, and then
562 with a shock I realized that the women were singing as well, the
533 sacred songs of the molimo. And they were not just joining in, they were leading the singing. Songs that I had thought only the men knew and were allowed to sing—all of a sudden the women were showing that they not only knew them but could sing them with
765 just as much intensity. Kondabate suddenly sprang up and seized
562 the banja sticks from Kelemoke, and began beating the urgent mo-
535 limo rhythm: *one* two, *one* two three, *one* two three. She beat the
[534] banja faster and faster, and I saw the old woman begin to twitch in every muscle. Kondabate was already half dancing, and it was as though she was passing the life and force from her body into the dried-up skinny old body in front of her. The old crone's legs started stamping up and down, and she sat back on her buttocks so that she could lift her feet higher. Then her arms began moving, pointing in

this direction and that; even her fingers each seemed to have a dance 765
of its own. But her head was still, and her eyes were fixed on those 562
of Kondabate. 535

At this point Kondabate handed the banja to another of the 765
women standing nearby and led the young girls right into the center 562
of the men's group, dancing in a close circle around the molimo fire. 535
As they moved around, the men stood up and made room for them, 533
and now the singing came almost entirely from the women. The men just stood and stamped and clapped and growled a bass accompaniment. The girls danced more and more wildly, but their heads and eyes were always turned toward the molimo fire, no matter how violent the body movement. After nearly half an hour the old woman, still crouching, ran into the center after the girls, and turning to face them from the far side of the fire she drove them slowly backward, back until they were lost among the others at the edge of the group. The singing was quieter, and in a few minutes it faded away altogether. Not a word was spoken.

After a short rest the singing started again, and this time there was no mistaking it—the women were leading. Manyalibo's wife picked up the banja and beat them, sharply and decisively, and the girls began the song. The men followed in obedient chorus. Once again, as the song grew faster, the old woman began to twitch until her whole body was alive with movement. Then she sprang up and came into the center of the kumamolimo alone. For an instant she stood there, and her head moved sharply from side to side. It was like the movement of a bird, keeping a wary eye open for possible foes. As she began to dance she seemed to sink slowly into the ground, her knees folding up like a concertina, her body bending at the waist; but always her head stuck out in front, jerking from side to side, eyes staring and expressionless.

She circled the fire three times, looking out and upward into the [372]
night, but unseeing; then as if satisfied that she was alone and un-

765 observed she flung her head and her whole body around and faced
562 the fire directly. She was about seven or eight feet away from it. She
535 • 533 advanced slowly and cautiously, two steps forward, one step back,
372 her attention riveted on the flames. The singing was louder and faster, but she refused to be hurried. At her own pace she approached closer and closer until it seemed impossible that she could stand the heat. She hesitated at the brink of the fire, her frail body gleaming with sweat, her face glowing and trembling. She made as if she was going to pounce on the fire, but whirled around at the last moment and danced quickly back to where the women were singing, watching her, eagerly and anxiously. She sat down on her haunches and accepted a steaming bowl of liko.

The singing did not stop this time but went on quietly at a slower tempo. The men made no attempt to move back closer to the fire. After about ten minutes the old lady, apparently refreshed and as full of vigor as ever, danced back into the men's circle, with Kondabate at her side. Their movements were perfectly co-ordinated, even to the twitching of their heads; as they sank down close to the
765 ground they might have been one person. But as they neared the
562 fire, again having circled it several times, the old woman sprang to
535 her feet and ran swiftly around to the far side and crouched there,
372 staring at Kondabate through the flames. They started circling once more, each keeping her eyes on the other, moving from side to side so that they were always opposite each other. But now they were closer to the fire than they had ever been and on their hands and knees they passed through the hot ashes, as though trying to reach each other through the flames.

Finally Kondabate retreated and squatted down at the edge of the circle, her body twitching just as the old woman's had done, her eyes staring and empty as she gazed at the molimo fire. The men heaped more wood on the flames, which were beginning to die down.
[533] Now they were singing as loudly as the women, stamping on the

ground with their feet and dancing with their arms and bodies, but 765
never moving from where they stood. The old woman grew taller 562
and more upright. Her bent old frame straightened out and she stood 535
proudly, arms at her side, bent at the elbows so that her hands were 372
out in front. Those hands had a life of their own, pointing and [533]
gesticulating and dancing with infinite grace at the end of motionless arms. The old woman no longer looked from side to side. She knew she had nothing to fear now, that she was the victor. And when she stooped once more to approach the fire she did not stoop so low, and each step was a step forward. As the singing quickened so did her steps, until with a burst of frenzied shouting she was driven right into the flames.

She seemed to hover there an instant, that skinny old crone who should have been burned to a cinder in a flash. Then she whirled around and kicked out with her feet, scattering the sacred molimo fire in all directions. Blazing logs and glowing embers alike she scattered, right among the circle of men surrounding her. And then she danced away, erect and proud. The men, without even faltering in their song, quickly gathered all the scattered embers and threw them back onto the remaining coals, and then for the first time they moved in a dance of their own. They danced in a wild circle, and as they danced their bodies swayed backward and forward, facing the fire, as though by imitation of the act of generation they were giving the fire new life. And as they danced the flames slowly began to rise, and as they rose the men danced all the more violently, until they had brought the fire of the molimo back to life.

Twice more this happened. Each time the old woman made a
more determined effort to stamp the fire out of existence. And each [831]
time the strangely beautiful and exciting erotic dance of the men
gave it new life. Finally the old woman conceded defeat and retreated 765
among the others. Shortly afterward all the women disappeared, and 562

765 the men rearranged themselves at the kumamolimo without making
562 any mention of what had happened.

I looked at Moke, and found him staring at me curiously. He understood my question and nodded. Yes, this was what he had told me I was yet to see.

765 There is an old legend that once it was the women who "owned"
562 the molimo, but the men stole it from them and ever since the
773 women have been forbidden to see it. Perhaps this was a way of reminding the men of the origin of their molimo. There is another old legend which tells that it was a woman who stole fire from the chimpanzees or, in yet another version, from the great forest spirit. Perhaps the dance had been in imitation of this. I did not understand it by any means, but somehow it seemed to make sense.

562 The woman is not discriminated against in BaMbuti society as she is in some African societies. She has a full and important role to
[462] play. There is relatively little specialization according to sex. Even the hunt is a joint effort. A man is not ashamed to pick mushrooms and nuts if he finds them, or to wash and clean a baby. A woman is free to take part in the discussions of men, if she has something relevant to say. In fact, it was the apparent absolute dominance of the male in the molimo that had seemed to be the exception.

562 But now even in this the woman had come into her own. She had
372 asserted her prior claim to the fire of life, and her ability to destroy
182 it, to extinguish life. Or had she been destroying it? Perhaps when she was kicking the fire out in all directions among the menfolk she was giving it to them, for them to gather and rebuild and revitalize with the dance of life.

765 I was trying to puzzle it all out when the singing started again,
533 and I saw that the old woman had returned, alone. All the others were in their huts, and the men seemed to be singing as though by their song they could drive the last remaining female away. They sang louder and harder, but she kept circling the kumamolimo, keep-

ing in the shadows, until with surprisingly swift and agile strides 765 533 • she was once more in our midst. In her hands she held a long roll of 765 nkusa twine. The men continued singing, and as they sang, the old 533 woman went around knotting a loop around each man's neck, so 824 that in the end we were all tied together. The men made no attempt [284] to resist; rather, they ignored what was going on. When they were all tied in this way, however, they stopped singing.

Moke spoke—I am not sure whether it was for my benefit or 765 because it was his place to say what he did. He said, "This woman has tied us up. She has bound the men, bound the hunt, and bound the molimo. We can do nothing." Then Manyalibo said that we had to admit we had been bound, and that we should give the woman something as a token of our defeat; then she would let us go. A certain quantity of food and cigarettes was agreed upon, and the old woman solemnly went among us again, untying each man. Nobody attempted to loose himself, but as each man was untied he began to sing once more—the molimo was free. The old woman received her gifts and went back to Cephu's camp, where she and her husband were staying. The couple stayed for another week or two, but she danced only once again. Before she left us she went to every man, giving him her hand to touch as though it were some kind of blessing.

It was not long after this that everyone started talking about when they should bring the molimo to an end. There seemed to be no specific length of time that it should run, and it was just a question of convenience.

There was the matter of the elima to be considered, too, as evidently 881 one really was due to be held for two girls, each of whom had reached her first period. The main problem was not the fulfilling of ritual necessities, but rather how to make the most of the festive occasion. There were different schools of thought as to whether 881 the elima should take place in the village or the forest; the younger 177

883 179 92 [273] would I be able to stand?' And I shall give them money to go and buy themselves beer."

"And where will you get the money?" asked young Kaoya, trying hard to believe that his idol was telling the truth.

"Their wives will pay me for sleeping with them, of course!" answered Kenge, and he went into a dubious pantomime illustrating just how he was going to do this.

554 52 [152] Manyalibo, who had been more morose than anyone else, and who was lying on his hunting net at the kumamolimo, propped himself up and shouted across the camp. "You, Teleabo Kenge, you speak of the great man you are going to be when you get to the village. How is it that you cannot be such a man here in the forest? Why do you [765] spend all your time with children? Why do you leave the molimo at night and go to sleep like a suckling baby? How long have you been out of your mother's stomach? Come here at once and beat the banja for the molimo."

765 This is one of the few occasions on which Kenge did not answer back. He hesitated a second, then called out, "I am coming, Father." He went running over, picked up the banja, and started beating them for all he was worth. He called out to all the men to listen to him, not to be so lazy, to come to the kumamolimo and sing. Was not he, Teleabo Kenge, beating the banja? And was this not the last night of the molimo in the forest?

765 533 [535] The singing that night was perhaps the best it had ever been. The molimo sang the most wistful songs, and the men answered it with love. When some of the youngsters began to dance Moke shook his head and told them to leave that for the village. Tonight was for singing. And just before dawn, when the molimo was about to leave the fireside, it sang to each of us in turn. It caressed the melody with love, and passed over our heads, one by one. As it left, Moke came around the group and stood a moment in front of each of us. His hands fluttered lightly around our bodies, occasionally touch-

ing us as gently as the breeze. When he had finished he stood by 765
the fire and sang to the forest by himself, with the molimo answering 533
from a great distance, getting fainter and fainter. Finally they were both singing so quietly that I could hardly distinguish their music from the music of the crickets and the frogs and the birds of the night. Somewhere a hyrax gave its throaty, rasping call of despair, [136]
and an owl hooted. Moke sat down, and nobody spoke, and nobody sang. Something wonderful had come into our lives and filled them [152]
with the magic of love and trust, and though we still possessed that love and trust, we regretted the going of the power that had brought it.

At dawn we were awakened as usual by the sound of the two 765
trumpets. But there was a quality about their tone that was harsh 534
and brash. We all knew that the real molimo had gone, but we had 177
to go through with the final ritual for the benefit of the villagers. The bellowings did not last long, and soon the trumpets disappeared in the direction of the village with a bunch of noisy youths in attendance. Later, when the main body of the camp was packed up and ready to leave, one of the youths came running back and told us with great excitement what fun they had had frightening the villagers with the molimo, but that now it was safely hidden in the forest, on the outskirts of the village.

We got a warm reception as we emerged from the plantations 177
among the neat rows of mud houses. The villagers eyed the baskets on the women's backs and tried to estimate how much meat they were bringing. They called out offers of free meals in an attempt to bribe their way into the favor of people whom they theoretically regarded as slaves. As we filed from the leafy plantation, leaving the forest behind us, we left a kind and friendly world and entered a different one. Here, if the world was open to the sky it was also open to greed and suspicion and treachery. Village women attached themselves to "their" Pygmies and tried to pry into the baskets

MOLIMO: THE DANCE OF DEATH

The evening meal was a good one, as the Pygmies had brought 262
in far more meat than they allowed to the villagers, and in return 264 433
for what they had given away they had received generous portions 177
of rice, beans, groundnuts and manioc, and a few of the tiny bitter
tomatoes which blend so well with manioc leaves and groundnuts
in the making of a sauce. When it was dark, the women and chil- 533
dren retired almost immediately, and the men gathered at the central 571
fire where four upright poles indicated the Pygmy version of a *baraza*, [345]
or men's meeting place. At first, several villagers came to see what [535]
was going on, and the Pygmies sang and danced for them. They
sang and danced until the villagers, tired after a heavy day's work
in the plantations, went to bed. Then the men really began to sing.
They sang and sang until it seemed almost as though we were back
in the forest. But any time there was a strange sound, and it was suspected that there might be a villager lurking about, they stopped.
They had guards posted all around to make sure they were not
caught unawares.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning when the 765
molimo made its appearance. It came into the camp preceded by two 534
youths holding glowing firebrands in their hands. Waving the brands 372
high in the air, then swinging them down to touch the ground,
they laid a fiery path for the molimo to follow. It was stately and
imposing. Following this path of glowing cinders the molimo circled
the village several times and then came to rest by the fire, where it
sang very quietly. Just as I wondered if it was really going to sing
as it did in the forest it moved off, and the tempo increased. Surrounded now by all the youths, the molimo started running around,
faster and faster, making lightning swoops on the group of older men
who were sitting by the fire. The rest of the men were either dancing
in a frenzy around the fire itself, as if protecting it, or else they
were with the molimo. I heard a crunching sound as the molimo 765
plowed through a small field of sugar cane at the edge of the vil- 534

765 lage, and I heard leaves being ripped off roofs and the dried mud
534 beaten from walls.

765 There was a subtle change of atmosphere, and a tremendous air
• 533 of expectancy. By their insistent singing the older men seemed to
781 be trying to avert some disaster, as did the youths by their danc-
[513] ing. Moke allowed nobody to sleep or rest except for a very brief spell when he kept half a dozen men singing while the others dozed as best they could around the fire. Then he woke us up and goaded us all into singing harder than ever. The molimo had left and was evidently playing havoc in the Negro village. But as we sang it came sweeping back into the camp from behind Ekianga's house.
765 The two fire-dancers in front sent showers of sparks up into the air
781 and onto the ground. The molimo made straight for the central fire.
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534 It knocked us aside—even old Tungana—and slowly and deliber-
372 ately it trampled through the fire, scattering it to all sides.

The men who had been sitting were on their feet at once, and hurriedly threw the scattered logs back into the center and joined the dancers in bringing life back to the fire. But the molimo was insistent, and the next time all the men joined with it. Reluctantly at first, then sharing the inevitability of the occasion they too danced and stamped among the flaming logs until there was nothing left but glowing coals. As the pace of the dance increased, the embers were scattered wider and wider, until the whole of the village seemed to be carpeted with winking red eyes. The molimo was once again blowing martial blasts, and the men accompanied it with a deep, rhythmic chant. All except a few of the elders followed it on its last tour of the camp, slow and majestic, tramping out the fire of life until there was only one glowing ember left. I saw Moke sadly sit down on the ground beside it, pick it up in his hands and fondle it.
[276] He took a cigarette butt from behind his ear and lighted it with the coal. He put the coal carefully back on the ground, stood up and stepped on it until it too was extinguished. Then he turned his back on us all and disappeared into his hut.

the young bachelors. And together with the older women they be- 881
gan to sing, in deep contralto tones. The men protested loudly that [832]
they were tired and wanted to sleep. But the women just laughed [533]
and sang all the louder. The elima had started in earnest.

tain their control over the Pygmies, so they created and maintained the myth that there was a hereditary relationship between individual Pygmies and families and individual Negroes and families. C 177 563 P 177

It was not a matter of slavery, rather of mutual convenience. The cost to the Negro was often high, but it was worth while. The Pygmy was able to do for him all the necessary chores that necessitated going into the forest and could bring him game that supplemented an otherwise largely vegetarian diet. And in latter days, with the compulsory maintenance of larger plantations, the Negro found the Pygmy a useful source of additional labor. But for all of this he had to pay, and he was always uncertain how long any one Pygmy or group of Pygmies would stay with him. They were frequently miles away in the heart of the forest, and if the hunting was good no amount of coaxing would bring them back. P C [464]

For the first week back at Camp Putnam, I found the villagers going out of their way to be generous to "their" Pygmies. The Pygmies wandered about idly, hanging around wherever they found food cooking, occasionally responding to a request to help with some kind of work. The village blacksmith, a man of many parts, adopted Masisi's family, though Masisi himself would have nothing to do with him. He said that Baziani was a trouble-maker, whch he was, and that he was after Masisi's daughter, which was also true. But Baziani was wealthy, and Masisi's children spent most of their time in his baraza. They were well fed and looked after, and treated more as friends than anything else. Baziani, in return, made use of them to run errands, usually connected with his virtual monopoly of the local hemp market. P 177 571 C 177 571 326 556 [443]

Baziani was genuinely fond of the Pygmies. In the evenings he used to bring out his drums and the Pygmies would gather around and dance. After a while Baziani would relinquish his part as a drummer, acknowledging the superiority of his friends. Then he sat back in his cane chair and watched with a contented smile. He was one of P C [533]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

P C 123 beside me, all night long, flirting and laughing. Even though I lost
571 574 a lot of sleep I learned several new facts of life.

P Over the next few days I saw the hunters go off to bring back the
[832] meat that would make their friend well and strong; and each day
P they collected roots and herbs which they prepared and gave to
C Hari's sister to treat Kaweki with. Just their very presence, boisterous
571 and cheerful, was a tonic to the invalid. On the second night he came
574 out into the clearing and lay down beside the fire, covered with a
177 758 blanket. He joined in the conversation of the Pygmies, joking and telling stories in their own manner. Then he half sang and half chanted legends of the past, urged on by Hari, who sat nearby with all the attentiveness and affection of a son, smiling happily when he saw the villager that he loved as a father slowly regain his strength and life.

In a few days Kaweki was up and about, though he still tired quickly. He thanked his friends and told them that they had no need to stay longer if they wanted to go. But it was a happy camp, and
C everyone was in favor of staying. Kaweki had built a dam above
[226] the falls, channeling all the fish into a long wicker trap—some twenty feet of elaborate basketry which caught the fish and held them firmly in its meshes until they were pulled out and killed. But the recent storm, which had broken just the day before we arrived, had breached the dam and damaged the trap. The Pygmies decided that they would rebuild it for Kaweki, and while a few of them hunted the rest went off and cut the wood needed, and returned to work under Kaweki's supervision.

In the evenings the Pygmies sang songs they would ordinarily never have sung in the presence of a villager. But Kaweki was a lover of the forest, and to the Pygmies that was all that mattered.
P On the evening when Kaweki actually danced and declared himself
[533] completely cured, the Pygmies responded by singing a song of the

molimo, just as they would have done for one of their own people—a song of praise and thanks to the forest for saving one of its children, even if he was a villager.

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though there are certain restrictions connected with it. In fact, the 881 841
Pygmies consider that any couple that really wants to have children [842]
should "sleep with the moon."

So when a young Pygmy girl begins to flower into maturity, 881
and blood comes to her for the first time, it comes to her as a gift, received with gratitude and rejoicing—rejoicing that the girl is now a potential mother, that she can now proudly and rightfully take a husband. There is no mention of fear or superstition, and everyone is told the good news.

The girl enters seclusion, but not the seclusion of the village girl. She takes with her all her young friends, those who have not yet reached maturity, and some older ones.

In the house of the elima the girls celebrate the happy event together. [861]
Together they are taught the arts and crafts of motherhood
by an old and respected relative. They learn not only how to live
like adults, but how to sing the songs of adult women. Day after
day, night after night, the elima house resounds with the throaty
contralto of the older women and the high, piping voices of the
youngest. It is a time of gladness and happiness, not for the women
alone but for the whole people. Pygmies from all around come to
pay their respects, the young men standing or sitting about outside
the elima house in the hopes of a glimpse of the young beauties
inside. And there are special elima songs which they sing to one [533]
another, the girls singing a light, cascading melody in intricate
harmony, the men replying with a rich, vital chorus. For the Pygmies
the elima is one of the happiest, most joyful occasions in their lives.

And so it was with happiness that we all heard that not one but two girls in our camp had been blessed by the moon.

At first it was just Akidinimba, daughter of Manyalibo's sister. 881
Akidinimba was a notorious flirt who considered herself the most 832
beautiful girl in the world. She was just sufficiently plump to be envied
by less well-endowed girls, but not so plump that her maidenly

881 In the one case Mambunia would come out of his hut in a temper
832 and send all the girls back to their house, and in the other case Asofalinda would run amok among the girls, boxing their ears until they, in turn, cried like the children they had beaten.

881 But the elima beauties did not confine themselves to their own
574 village. After all, most of the men there were relatives and so could not decently be invited into the elima house. Many strangers came to visit from other groups, but sometimes the attendance was disappointing. Then the girls would set out to visit one of their hunting
[123] camps. I followed them on one such escapade, having secured a promise first that I would be given complete immunity. It was a strange procession, the girls all oiled and painted to look their best, wearing grass skirts in imitation of the boys' initiation (an innovation that infuriated the villagers, who felt that their customs were being desecrated, and that caused open hostilities in the end), and carrying stout whips, twice as tall as they were. There were about eight of them in all, led of course by the irrepressible Akidinimba, bouncing her breasts up and down in a determined manner as she marched along the road, past the Station de Chasse, and over the bridge to the far side of the Epulu River. The villagers came out to look as we passed, but from a respectful distance. On other occasions I have seen a party such as this dive into the midst of a group of village men and women, lashing out with all their might—not entirely in the friendly way in which they would whip, say, old Tungana, as a compliment to his virility.

On the far side of the Epulu we climbed up the hill toward Eboyo, the sun beating down on us so that the chatter and laughter of the girls was almost stilled. But just before reaching Eboyo we turned off, following a trail through an old plantation and into the
881 forest. As the trees closed in around and above us, the girls began to
574 sing. They sang loudly and proudly, marching with even more de-
533 termination than before, their heads back, looking at the familiar

leafy world that was theirs. One at a time they sang ribald little solos, 881
each trying to outdo the others, the rest joining in with a throaty 574
chorus that cascaded downward like a waterfall. Each girl held her 533 •
note as the others came in after her, swelling the volume of a great chord of music until they had no breath left. Then they all stopped together, sharply and suddenly, and cocked their heads to one side to listen for the echo sent back to them by the forest.

And so we continued our noisy, festive way, until we had climbed 881
up and down the forest paths for about an hour. On this side of the 574
Epulu the forest was hilly, and at times the path was steep and [487]
difficult. But still the girls sang. At last we came to the edge of one of Sabani's hidden plantations, and the girls became silent. They made their way cautiously to the edge of a cluster of houses built in the middle of the plantation. This was where some of Sabani's relatives lived when they were keeping an eye on planting or harvesting activities. Akidinimba explained, in a gusty, confidential whisper, that her very special boy friend, Pumba, would probably be there. She was very much in love with him, she said, far more so than with any of the other boys. And she wanted him. The only trouble was that he did not seem to want her.

Having discovered that Pumba was indeed there, dozing on a 881
chair in the baraza of one of the houses, the girls entered the village 832
with a rush, shouting and yelling and brandishing their whips. Pumba awoke with a start, but he was too low down in the chair and could not get up in time to escape. He was plainly terrified, because in her determination to get her man Akidinimba had detailed all the other girls to go for him alone. When Pumba finally managed to break away and run blindly into the safety of the hut, slamming the door shut behind him, his body was covered with long angry welts, some of which were bleeding. Akidinimba wiped her nose with the back of her arm and smiled grimly. Well pleased with her success she simply sat down outside the door waiting for Pumba

During this time the older women paid more and more attention 881
to what was going on and gathered almost nightly outside the house to join in the singing. But one evening was different in that almost every woman in the group was there. There were even some women from Cephu's group, which had temporarily detached itself and was now some miles away. They gathered early, before it was fully dark. The bright blue sky was deepening without any of the wild tinges of color that so often come at dusk, and the tiny puffs of cloud that drifted across remained a shining, fluffy white, even when the sky was almost black.

The women brought sticks of fire with them, and some of them cooked and ate their evening meal right there outside the elima house; others just sat around and gossiped, huddling close to the fires from habit, though in the village it was still warm. Inside the house the girls were singing, but the women outside did not join in. The men sat before their huts, watching and waiting. Finally the 881
door opened and the girls trooped out. The younger ones came first, 302
their bodies decorated with modest blobs of white paste made from clay; then came Akidinimba and Kidaya and their attendants, resplendent and magnificent, yet strangely shy. They must have spent hours working on themselves and one another, for they were covered with elaborate patterns skillfully drawn with fingers and thin sticks, also using the white clay. Akidinimba had taken particular trouble to paint her breasts with intricate circles of lines punctuated with blobs, something like a grapevine gone to seed, whereas the more demure Kidaya had concentrated on her buttocks, and these were covered with a hundred carefully painted little stars. Each girl had her favorite style, and each was different. They looked around coyly, to make sure they were being admired, and sat down at the edge of the group of women.

They began singing then, together with the women, much more 881
seriously than they had ever done before. They sang as though they 533

881 533 *were* women. They sang right through the evening and now and
then stood up and danced in a bashful circle around one of the fires.
881 They sang songs whose words had no particular significance, but
885 which in themselves were of the greatest significance, being songs
533 sung only by adult women. That was why so many of the mothers
and grandmothers had assembled, to welcome their daughters into
their midst again, no longer as children, but as friends and partners
[591] in adult life. Some of the women looked sad, for they knew that
this meant that the girls would soon get married, and then they
would almost certainly leave to join their husbands in other camps.

881 Akidinimba was very different from her usual boisterous self. She
885 was still self-assured, and she bounced her breasts up and down as
157 flagrantly as ever, but perhaps she was subdued by the thought that
she was no longer the leader of a group of young girls, but only a
young and inexperienced member of womanhood, with all the responsibilities this entailed.

881 Kidaya too was thoughtful. While the others sang Kidaya sat
533 with her back to them, fondling a large clay cooking pot. She tapped
415 on it with her fingers, keeping time to the music. Then she drew it
close and held the mouth of the pot against her stomach, bending
her head down to listen to the effect. It evidently pleased her, because
she continued the experiment by taking hold of her breasts and forcing them into the mouth of the pot, squirming around until she was
comfortable. Then she moved her body rhythmically, producing a
variety of curious sounds, not only in the tone of the drumming of
her hands, but by making sucking noises as the air was forced in and
out. When she tired of that she put the pot between her knees, and
sang quietly into the mouth of it, getting a deep reverberating effect.
This sounded so much like the molimo that the men started, and
one of the women turned and said something sharply to Kidaya.
881 Kidaya herself was a little startled and put the pot away from her.
152 She relapsed into a thoughtful mood, slowly and deliberately rubbing
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881 ing that he is not only capable of feeding his own family but also able
885 to help feed the older members of the group who can no longer fend
224 for themselves.

881 Once a boy has gained access to the elima hut he may flirt or
836 even sleep with the girl who invited him. The elima gives an
584 opportunity for boys and girls to get to know each other intimately, and
such friendships often end in marriage. On the other hand, it gives
two lovers a chance to discover that they are unsuited to each other
881 before becoming betrothed officially. From what I was told, by older
836 men and women as well as by the bachelors who took part in this
elima, it is even possible to have intercourse, but with certain restrictions. These restrictions must be effective in preventing conception, because nowhere have I ever heard of a girl becoming pregnant in an elima house. A boy may sleep with a girl only if she consents. The tacit consent of her mother has already been given by his having been allowed to gain access to the elima house. If he sleeps with her then he must not leave the house and has to stay there until the festival is over, subject to the same restrictions as the girls. But he may decide on just a mild flirtation. Or he may—and this is considered a master move—simply turn around and leave the house without having paid the slightest attention to any of the girls. Whatever happens, there are always young women, such as Kondabate, to keep an eye on their younger companions and see that they do not get into trouble.

881 The conclusion of this particular elima was an anticlimax. The
771 Pygmies are not a ritualistically minded people; to them the
182 important thing about any festival is that they should openly express
their emotions and accept the realities of whatever situation the
[765] festival marks. Instead of living in constant fear of the spirits of the
• [533] dead, performing elaborate rituals to remove the souls of the departed
as far away as possible and as quickly as possible, the Pygmies sing
881 in their memory for months on end, during the molimo. And so,
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Congo-Kinshasa FO1

866
881 made his way painfully to join the other boys, all sitting in a line on
P logs. Immediately after being cut they are made to sit down and join
881 the others in singing one of the many work songs they will have to
866 learn during the coming months. This takes their mind off the pain,
177 which is all the more considerable because after the operation the
E wound is wrapped in a leaf containing a native medicine that is full
[533] of salt. Kaoya was very roughly handled, and Masalito ran up to him
[757] and put his arms around him, hugging him tight to give him
strength. The villagers howled with laughter, but Masalito was more
concerned with Kaoyo than with them.

C
881 Not long afterward the boys were made to dance, and then put to
352 rest on a special bed made of split logs, laid side by side on a rough
346 frame that kept them two feet or so off the ground. The boys lay
513 face downward along the length of the logs, their heads resting on
P
881 pillows made of plantain leaves. Over the bed there was a rough
177 shelter, sloping down to the ground behind, but open all along the
C front and on two sides. From the roof was hung a sacred banana,
[824] which initiates and instructors would set swinging as an understood
[778] command for the boys to start singing. The boys were forbidden to
touch the banana, being told they would die if they did.

C There were all sorts of other taboos, or restrictions. To get wet,
881 particularly by being outside when it rained, was sure to bring
P
881 death. To eat certain foods was strictly prohibited. The boys had to
177 eat without using their hands directly, spearing the food with sticks.
C They were forbidden to eat with their initiated relatives. The sound
P
[784] of the bull-roarer, a piece of wood that makes a strange whirring
[534] noise when spun around on the end of a cord, was meant to be the
[776] voice of a forest demon, and the boys had to show due respect and
terror when they heard it.

During the daytime, when the villagers were present, either as instructors or just as visitors, the boys adhered faithfully to all these and many other rules. By their own rules, however, the villagers were

influences of the villagers, particularly witchcraft. The theory was 361
that they would be independent because they would no longer have 829
to rely on the villagers for plantains, rice, peanuts, or other village 177
foods. In point of fact the only thing for which the Pygmies might really be considered to depend on their neighbors was metal for their knife and spear blades. And this was the one thing the model plan for liberation did not teach them to produce or work for themselves.

It may have been coincidence, or it may have been the result of 152
all this talk of Pygmy villages and of the way that elsewhere the 177
forest was being cut down by modern machinery to build new roads, 178
to open up new mines, or to cultivate more coffee, but within a few 185
days what had been a happy-go-lucky camp became silent and depressed. The unhappy Pygmies argued that the more the forest was cut down for roads and mines and foreign plantations, the more would have to be cut down to make more plantations to feed all the
laborers. It was not a happy outlook for them. Then, as always hap- [533] •
pened when they were upset, they began to sing one evening. They sang and sang, and even those who had been sleeping came out to join in.

During a pause between songs, while everyone was silent, we 533
heard quite distinctly the long-drawn-out whistling cry that the 825
Pygmies say comes from the chameleon. There was a shout of delight, and the singing immediately started again, but this time to a quite different tempo. The rhythm was given out by the sharp clapping of two short sticks which Amabosu had quickly cut from a nearby tree. They rang clear and true. The cry of the chameleon and the use of the *ngbengbe* sticks meant only one thing—there was honey nearby. Within a few days there was not a Pygmy left in the village.

Of all the many foods in the forest, honey attracts the Pygmies 222
the most strongly. At all times of the year game is to be caught, dif- 262
ferent kinds of mushrooms and fruits and nuts and berries are to be

sobbed her heart out—probably for the first time in her wonderful, 734 481 123 [152] hard-bitten old life.

The days that followed were full of happiness for everyone. Once Lizabeti got over her fright I made her practice regularly, to give her more strength in her good leg. She was soon able to stand up by herself, using the crutches for a lever. Not once did she fall. And the other children cut themselves crutches so that they could join in the fun, and together they found a new world of delight. When I was not coaxing Lizabeti to use her crutches more and more, someone else was, for everyone was anxious to see her fly over the ground just like Kenge, who by now was a master acrobat on his crutches, from which he refused to be parted.

In other respects, however, the camp became less pleasant, at any 222 rate for me. The bees began to come in droves after their stolen honey. All day long they buzzed angrily around, so that we kept smoky fires in our huts night and day.

Almost every hour someone returned from a secret forage, with leaf bundles tied to his belt, dripping the sticky liquid down his legs. Sometimes it was too liquefied to be eaten, and then the whole bundle was simply dipped into a bowl of clear forest water, making a sweet-tasting drink. But far more popular was the whole comb which 222 262 could be eaten grubs, larvae, bees and all. If it was very hard, it was first softened over the fire, and this made the grubs squirm more actively so that the honey worked its own way down your throat. It was, however, the best-tasting honey of all, despite the insects.

Apuma was yet another kind of honey, which came later in the season. It was full of grubs too, but they were all dead, and the [273] honey had fermented. It was made by a different kind of bee and tasted like a bitter liqueur; if eaten in any quantity it could be highly intoxicating. But the Pygmy needs no stimulant in the honey season. 222 He is drunk with the forest, with its beauty and abundance, 527 and with the love it showers on its people. Every night that tiny 517 [533]

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527 camp resounded to songs of joy and praise, accompanied by the ring-
517 ing of the ngbengbe sticks as they were clapped together in complex
[533] cross rhythms by boys and girls alike. Every night Masisi told his group, which had steadily grown ever since the beginning, stories about the past. And every night we went to bed content, knowing
[825] that the morrow would be even better; for each day we discovered fresh growths of mushrooms, trees full of different kinds of nuts, and each night the chameleon gave its long, sad cry, to tell us that on the morrow we would have more honey.

222 One night in particular will always live for me, because that night
535 I think I learned just how far away we civilized human beings have
517 drifted from reality. The moon was full, so the dancing had gone on for longer than usual. Just before going to sleep I was standing outside my hut when I heard a curious noise from the nearby children's bopi. This surprised me, because at nighttime the Pygmies generally never set foot outside the main camp. I wandered over to see what it was.

[301] There, in the tiny clearing, splashed with silver, was the sophisticated Kenge, clad in bark cloth, adorned with leaves, with a flower stuck in his hair. He was all alone, dancing around and singing softly to himself as he gazed up at the treetops.

Now Kenge was the biggest flirt for miles, so, after watching a while, I came into the clearing and asked, jokingly, why he was dancing alone. He stopped, turned slowly around and looked at me as though I was the biggest fool he had ever seen; and he was plainly surprised by my stupidity.

[778] "But I'm *not* dancing alone," he said. "I am dancing with the
[821] forest, dancing with the moon." Then, with the utmost unconcern, he ignored me and continued his dance of love and life.

621 As the weeks went by, however, a note of dissatisfaction stirred
578 in the camp. Masisi began to complain that the others, including
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224 Manyalibo, were way off to the north getting meat, yet they had